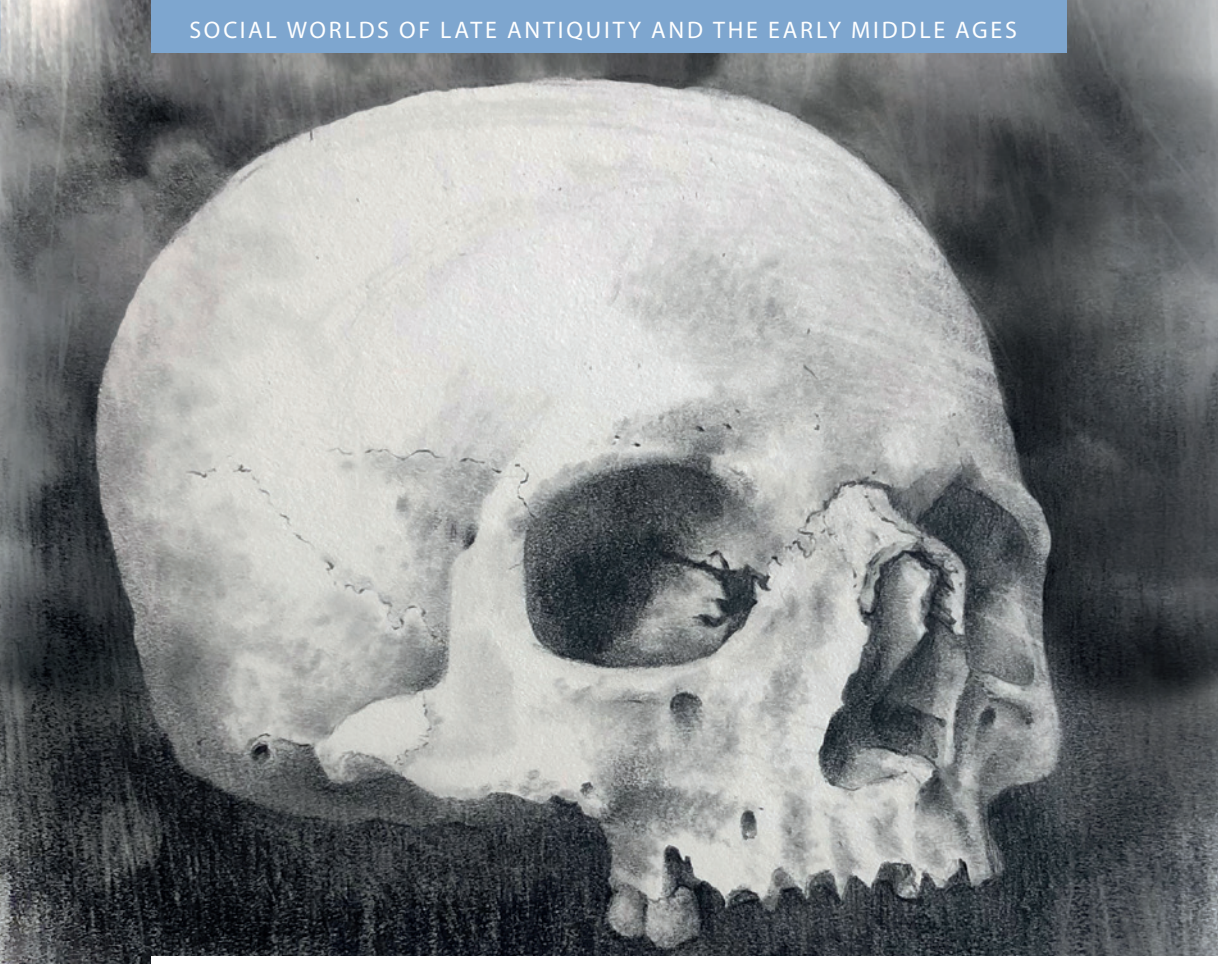
SOCIAL WORLDS OF LATE ANTIQUITY AND THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES



Allen E. Jones

Death and Afterlife in the Pages of Gregory of Tours

Religion and Society in Late Antique Gaul

Amsterdam University Press

Death and Afterlife
in the Pages of Gregory of Tours

Social Worlds of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages

The Late Antiquity experienced profound cultural and social change: the political disintegration of the Roman Empire in the West, contrasted by its continuation and transformation in the East; the arrival of 'barbarian' newcomers and the establishment of new polities; a renewed militarization and Christianization of society; as well as crucial changes in Judaism and Christianity, together with the emergence of Islam and the end of classical paganism. This series focuses on the resulting diversity within Late Antique society, emphasizing cultural connections and exchanges; questions of unity and inclusion, alienation and conflict; and the processes of syncretism and change. By drawing upon a number of disciplines and approaches, this series sheds light on the cultural and social history of Late Antiquity and the greater Mediterranean world.

Series Editor
Carlos Machado, University of St. Andrews

Editorial Board
Lisa Bailey, University of Auckland
Maijastina Kahlos, University of Helsinki
Volker Menze, Central European University
Ellen Swift, University of Kent
Enrico Zanini, University of Siena

Death and Afterlife in the Pages of Gregory of Tours

Religion and Society in Late Antique Gaul

Allen E. Jones

Amsterdam University Press

Cover illustration: James Gregory Skaggs

Cover design: Coördesign, Leiden
Lay-out: Crius Group, Hulshout

ISBN 978 94 6298 804 0
e-ISBN 978 90 4854 008 2
DOI 10.5117/9789462988040
NUR 684

© A. E. Jones / Amsterdam University Press B.V., Amsterdam 2020

All rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the written permission of both the copyright owner and the author of the book.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 7
Abbreviations 9
Introduction 11

Part I Death

1. Peering into the Invisible World 25
Death and the Little Boy 26
Becoming Gregory I 36
Conclusion 49

2. Maturing Spiritually in a Perilous World 53
Death and the Aspiring Cleric 53
Becoming Gregory II 66
Studium ad ecclesiastica scripta 76
Conclusion 87

3. Pastoring from the Pulpit and the Page 89
Death and the Bishop 89
Death and the Historian? 100
Bishop, Author, Pastor 111
Writings and Sermons 112
Sin, Penance, Grace 114
Living Holy People 124
Sinners 133
Conclusion 140

Part II Afterlife

4. Discerning the Denizens of Heaven and Hell 145
The Saved 146
Visionaries and Heaven 151
Communicating Salvation: *Migrare* and *Transire* 153
Hellmates 157
Signs of Condemnation 166

Communicating Damnation: *Interire, Iudicium Dei, Ultio Divina* 172
Lessons and Warnings for Contemporaries 182
Conclusion 195

5. Fathoming the Fates of the Merovingians 201
Merovingians in Heaven 205
King Clovis and Queen Clotild 207
King Theudebert 224
Merovingians in Hell 230
King Chlodomer 230
A Mixed Bag: Kings Theuderic, Theudebald, Childebert I, Chlothar I and Prince Chramn 234
Kings Charibert and Sigibert 245
Kings Chilperic and Guntram 255
Conclusion 272

6. Conclusion 275
Killer Queen(s) 277
King Guntram and Gregory's Unfinished Project 285
Afterword 292

Bibliography 297
Primary Sources 297
Secondary Works 299

Index 315

Acknowledgements

Much writing for the manuscript of this book happened in 2019 during a fall sabbatical granted by Troy University. I am grateful for assistance by Troy University's College of Arts and Sciences, the Department of History and Philosophy, and the Library staff, particularly those at Interlibrary Loan.

This study marks the culmination of an investigation begun nineteen years ago. I have benefited greatly from insights imparted by attendees of many conference papers devoted to Gregory's writings about death and afterlife. Thanks to Ralph Mathisen in particular for frequent invites to sessions sponsored by the Society for Late Antiquity at the International Congress on Medieval Studies (Kalamazoo, MI). A fond thanks to Rebecca Weaver and Deanna Forsman for fun talk and meaningful commentary about late antiquity and Merovingians once upon a time. More recently Ben Wheaton, Kent Navalesi, Sam Shelton and my anonymous reviewers read entire drafts of the manuscript and provided many truly valuable suggestions for improvements to the text. Thanks to Greg Skaggs for an awesome book cover design. The editorial staff at Amsterdam University Press have been helpful in finalizing the publication process. Erin Dailey's support has been especially heartening and I have found his own research more inspirational towards the final phase of this project than he probably realizes. Of course, all errors and shortcomings in the book are my own.

While oft tucked away in my school office or at home in the sunroom, head buried in a book or a laptop, my thoughts frequently have blurred between Gregory's saints and relatives and my own beloved friends and family members. I dedicate this book to my family, especially to Patty and Mom, and to the memory of my father, Allen Sr.

Abbreviations

ACW *Ancient Christian Writers*

CCSL *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*

CSEL *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*

CSR Gregory of Tours, *De cursu stellarum ratio*, in Bruno Krusch (ed.), *MGH* SRM 1.2 (Hanover: Hahn, 1969), 404-422.

GC Gregory of Tours, *De gloria confessorum*, in Bruno Krusch (ed.), *MGH* SRM 1.2 (Hanover: Hahn, 1969), 284-370.

GM Gregory of Tours, *De gloria martyrum*, in Bruno Krusch (ed.), *MGH* SRM 1.2 (Hanover: Hahn, 1969), 34-111.

Historiae Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum*, in Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison (eds.), *MGH* SRM 1.1 (Hanover: Hahn, 1951), 1-537.

LCL *Loeb Classical Library*

MA Gregory of Tours, *De miraculis Beati Andreae Apostoli*, ed. by Max Bonnet, *MGH* SRM 1.2 (Hanover: Hahn, 1969), 171-96.

MGH *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*

- **AA** Auctores Antiquissimi
- **SS** Scriptores
- **SRM** Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum
  - **1.1** *MGH* SRM 1.1, ed. by Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison (Hanover: Hahn, 1951).
  - **1.2** *MGH* SRM 1.2, ed. by Bruno Krusch (Hanover: Hahn, 1951).
  - **2** *MGH* SRM 2, ed. by Bruno Krusch (Hanover: Hahn, 1888).
  - **3** *MGH* SRM 3, ed. by Bruno Krusch (Hanover: Hahn, 1896).

PL J. P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Latina* (Paris: Garnier, 1844-1865).

PLRE **2** John Martindale, *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

PLRE **3** John Martindale, *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. 3 A-B (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

PSD Gregory of Tours, *Passio sanctorum martyrum septem dormientium apud Ephesum*, in Bruno Krusch (ed.), *MGH* SRM 1.2 (Hanover: Hahn, 1969), 397-403.

PT Gregory of Tours, *In Psalterii tractatum commentarius*, in Bruno Krusch (ed.), *MGH* SRM 1.2 (Hanover: Hahn, 1969), 423-27; Pierre

Salmon (ed.), *Les "Tituli Psalmorum" des manuscrits latins*, Collectanea Biblica Latini, vol. 12 (Rome: Abbaye Saint-Jérome, 1959), 138-48.

SC *Sources Chrétiennes*

TTH *Translated Texts for Historians*

VP Gregory of Tours, *Vita Patrum*, in Bruno Krusch (ed.), *MGH* SRM 1.2 (Hanover: Hahn, 1969), 211-83.

VSJ Gregory of Tours, *De passione et de virtutibus S. Iuliani martyris*, in Bruno Krusch (ed.), *MGH* SRM 1.2 (Hanover: Hahn, 1969), 112-34.

VSM Gregory of Tours, *De virtutibus S. Martini episcopi*, in Bruno Krusch (ed.), *MGH* SRM 1.2 (Hanover: Hahn, 1969), 134-211.

Introduction

Gregory of Tours was a southern Gallic aristocrat (born c. 538) turned bishop of Tours (573-594) whose diocese rested precariously along one of the Frankish kingdoms' shifting frontiers.[1] He was a prolific writer whose surviving corpus includes ten books of history, ten books about saints and their miracles, a book for calculating times for evening prayers, and a commentary on the psalms.[2] In part because Gregory's writings are so voluminous and terribly significant for understanding the era – the *Historiae* are essential to any reconstruction of a sixth-century Gallic political narrative –, scholars frequently have aligned their thoughts about the author with their estimations on the condition of the society in which he lived. Prior to the late twentieth century, researchers turned to the *Historiae* far more than to the *Miracula* in order to gather evidence about Gregory's world. They took the bishop's many humble references to his literary shortcomings literally and accepted the *Historiae*'s many depictions of murder and mayhem as

1 During Gregory's episcopacy Tours was ruled by a succession of four kings who governed three different Frankish sub-kingdoms. Sigibert, king of Austrasia (the north-easternmost realm), appointed Gregory as bishop in 573 and held Tours up to the ruler's assassination in late 575. Chilperic, king of Neustria (the north-westernmost realm), controlled Tours until his assassination in mid-584. Guntram, king of Burgundy (the south-eastern realm), held Tours for about a year until he turned it over to Sigibert's son. Childebert II, king of Austrasia, presided over Tours beyond Gregory's death in 594 until the king's premature demise in 596.

On the Merovingian kingdoms: Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*; Hartmann, *Die Merowinger*; eadem, *Aufbruch ins Mittelalter*; James, *The Franks*; Ewig, *Die Merowinger*; Geary, *Before France and Germany*; Murray, "Merovingian State"; Esders, "Gallic Politics." On bishops: Heinzelmann, *Bischofsherrschaft in Gallien*; Jussen, "*Uber 'Bischofsherrschaft'*"; Scheibelreiter, *Der Bischof in merowinger Zeit*; Moore, *Sacred Kingdom*; Halfond, *Bishops and the Politics of Patronage*; Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity*; Pietri, *La ville de Tours*, 293-302.

2 Gregory provided two incomplete lists of his writings at *Historiae* 10.31 and *GC* preface, both of which mention the *Decem libri historiarum* (hereafter, *Historiae*). The hagiographical books he listed are the *Libri quattuor de virtutibus Sancti Martini episcopi* (hereafter, *VSM*), *Liber de passione et virtutibus Sancti Iuliani* (*VSJ*), *Liber de gloria confessorum* (*GC*), *Liber de gloria martyrum* (*GM*) and *Liber de vita patruum* (*VP*). Also listed are the *De cursu stellarum ratio* (*CSR*) and *In Psalterii tractatum commentarius* (*PT*). Not included in those lists are two paraphrased *vitae*, the *Passio sanctorum martyrum septem dormientium apud Ephesum* (*PSD*) and *Liber de miraculis Beati Andreae Apostoli* (*MA*). Two more works Gregory did not cite in the lists are a pair of introductions for collections he compiled, one on the masses of Sidonius Apollinaris and the other a selection of Christian poets. Neither of these are extant. Gregory undoubtedly wrote numerous letters and sermons, all of which are lost. All references to Gregory's Latin text are, for the *Historiae*, Krusch and Levison, ed., *MGH*, SRM 1.1 and for all else, Krusch, ed., *MGH*, SRM 1.2.

simple reflections of barbarous times. As a result scholars built a virtual consensus which labelled Gregory an incompetent writer, an untalented spokesperson for a "dark age" – a casualty of his own credulous and violent era –, a gullible believer in saints and miracles, and a historian ill prepared for the task which he alone undertook in sixth-century Gaul, to write a "history of the Franks."[3]

Dismantlement of this former near-consensus began in earnest during the 1970s with the work of two stalwarts, Peter Brown and Walter Goffart. Brown helped rescue "Gregorian studies" from the traditional position by folding analysis of the Gallic author's writings into a revolutionary reevaluation of hagiography of his own making whereby saints' lives become valuable sources for scholars of late ancient societies.[4] Specifically Brown dismissed earlier imaginings of Gregory as a practitioner of a naïve brand of Christianity, and instead assigned to him a persona that today's scholars uniformly regard as one of the bishop's most essential guises, an adept participant in the cult of saints.[5] Equally momentous was Walter Goffart's endeavor which thoroughly debunked a prevailing image of Gregory as author of a nationalistically attuned history.[6] Goffart exposed how Gregory did not compose a "history of the Franks"; rather, he wrote ten books of *Historiae*, the contents of which moralize to its audience as they alternate between political and religious themes.[7]

3 A barbarous writer reflecting the age: e. g., Ampère, *Histoire littéraire*, 2: 275-314; Bonnet, *Le Latin de Grégoire*, 76-85. To be sure there were dissenting opinions on Gregory's talents stretching back to the earliest analyses of his corpus and running into the twentieth century. E. g., Thierry Ruinart positively assessed Gregory's theology in 1699; Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 3. Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 85-89, in the mid-twentieth century appreciated Gregory's technique for scenic narrative. For valuable overviews of the early literature: de Nie, *Views*, 1-22; Goffart, *Narrators*, 112-27; Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 1-6; Breukelaar, *Historiography*, 14-21; Vollmann, "Gregor IV."

4 Brown, *Society and the Holy*; idem, *Cult of the Saints*; idem, *Rise of Western Christendom*, 155-65.

5 Brown added Gregory to his program of "making late antiquity" at Reading's Stenton Lectures in 1976; Brown, "Relics and Social Status." About Brown's centrality in stimulating a lasting scholarly fascination for Gregory's hagiography, Danuta Shanzer, "So Many Saints," 21, writes "[A]ll that was needed was one break, one influential reader to open the musty pages of an *MGH* volume. In 1977, the *Libri Miraculorum* found him – in Peter Brown." Alternatively, de Nie, *Views*, 9, identified Auerbach's 1946 monograph as the watershed publication for letting go traditional approaches and reevaluating Gregory. Felice Lifshitz, "Apostolicity Theses," 217, pinpointed a new direction for grasping the writer starting with Felix Thurlemann's 1974 monograph, which popularized Gregory's "deliberate discursive strategy."

6 A late example in the latter vein is Verdon, *Grégoire de Tours*.

7 Goffart, "From *Historiae* to *Historia Francorum*;" idem, *Narrators*.

A broad-ranging scholarly reevaluation of Gregory from the last two decades of the twentieth century to present has produced findings markedly different from what many thought about the bishop in days of old. Studies by researchers devoted to providing more sharply defined impressions about certain aspects of the figure have resulted in new and influential identities, prominent among which are Giselle de Nie's intellectually capable communicator, Ian Wood's insider to the Frankish political world, Raymond Van Dam's religiously sensitive client of the saints, and Martin Heinzelmann's theologically sophisticated historiographer.[8] Of further benefit to advancing knowledge about Gregory and his society have been efforts to analyze particular themes germane to the writer and his contemporaries. Notable monograph submissions include Isabel Moreira on dreams and visions, Lisa Bailey on religious practices among the laity, John Kitchen on gender in hagiography, Erin Dailey on elite women, and members of

8 De Nie, on the heels of Brown's cultural-anthropologically inspired reevaluation of Gregory as devotee of the saints, offered psychologically derived analyses of the bishop's motives; she got deep into Gregory's head. De Nie identified longstanding errant assumptions about Gregory's "naivety" and "simplicity" to be "an intellectualistic illusion of modern historians"; de Nie, *Views*, 26. By seeking to tease out the author's mental and verbal patterns built upon non-discursive but comprehensible imaginings, she enhanced the process of reestablishing Gregory's reputation as a communicator, thereby greatly improving subsequent scholarly attempts to interrelate with the subject; ibid., *Views*, 2. See also eadem, *Word, Image and Experience*. Both works include previously published articles, some with minor revision. Ian Wood has drawn attention to how partisanship and involvement in the power politics of Merovingian courts impacted Gregory's text. Wood's scholarship has called attention to the need for scholars to take heed of the writer's seemingly straight-forward literary presentations. Because Gaul's political atmosphere was fraught with peril, the bishop was not always at liberty to write openly. Thus, one may have to read between the lines to ascertain Gregory's message; Wood, "Secret Histories"; idem, "Individuality." Wood's insights on the alignment of Gregory's cultic activities with his familial interests is crucial; see Wood, "Ecclesiastical Politics"; idem, "Topographies of Holy Power."

Raymond Van Dam has elaborated on Gregory's motives and methods for building the special relationships he did with multiple saintly patrons while showing marked differences among the latter. Van Dam has firmly established how Gregory's cultic interactions with the saints, especially those with the martyr Julian of Brioude and the famed confessor Martin of Tours, were deeply personal, heartfelt endeavors; Van Dam, *Saints*; idem, *Leadership and Community*, 179-300.

Martin Heinzelmann has resuscitated Gregory's reputation in terms of both his historiographical and theological capabilities. His insights have stripped away all credibility for theories that perceive the bishop of Tours as an artless recorder of dark-age mishaps. Specifically, Heinzelmann has presented Gregory as a deft theologian whose historical writings constitute a pointedly Christocentric work evincing "theology in action" with bishops and kings each playing roles as principal characters and intended audience; Heinzelmann, *Gregor von Tours*; idem, *Gregory of Tours* (English translation of the former).

amicitia networks among other letter writers.[9] Now that we are fully four decades into the current program for reassessing Gregory and his world, one may argue that a new near-consensus regarding the writer has emerged. This may be evidenced by the appearance of two massive compendia dedicated expressly to the bishop of Tours.[10] Contributors to these tomes seem to concur in acknowledging that Gregory was an avid and expert promoter of saints' cults, an ecclesiastic fully enmeshed in the politics of his day, an accomplished hagiographer, and a talented historian capable of embedding sophisticated theological messages into a work of history. Just as scholars once offered derisive estimations about Gregory's society in tandem with their low estimations of the writer, many now match their "new and improved" Gregories with assertions that early Merovingian Gaul must have possessed a thriving literary culture capable of producing such a talented individual.[11]

However, despite researchers now sharing in a recognition of Gregory's talents and capabilities, many debates about the writer, his social contemporaries, and Gallic society in general persist.[12] For example, ascertaining Gregory's "true feelings" about contemporary Merovingians such as Kings Chilperic and Guntram is a pastime that continues to generate spirited argumentation.[13] Additionally, the issue of determining the extent to which Gregory's thoughts and actions were representative of his society, or even figuring out how to do that, ever haunts.[14] Also potentially problematic is the

9 Moreira, *Dreams, Visions*; Bailey, *Religious Worlds*; Kitchen, *Saints' Lives*; Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*; Tyrrell, *Merovingian Letters*. Jones, *Social Mobility*, hopefully is useful if occasionally rough around the edges. Three authors whose scattered contributions in journal articles and book chapters are thought provoking and, I think, mandatory for anyone studying Gregory's era are Guy Halsall, Danuta Shanzer, and Alexander Murray: Halsall, "Nero and Herod?"; idem, "Preface to Book V"; Shanzer, "History, Romance, Love, and Sex"; eadem, "Laughter and Humour"; eadem, "So Many Saints"; eadem, "Gregory of Tours and Poetry"; "Murray, "Chronology"; idem, "Composition."

10 Mitchell and Wood, eds., *World of Gregory of Tours*; Murray, ed., *Gregory of Tours*. See also a recent collected edition in which Gregory is a feature source for most of the articles; Esders, Hen, Lucas and Rotman, eds., *Merovingian Kingdoms*.

11 Hen, *Culture and Religion*; Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 20-32.

12 A simple perusal of the articles contained in either of the two aforementioned compendia attests to this. It will become obvious within that I question Heinzelmann's recent emphasis on a dominant Augustinian influence upon Gregory's writings.

13 Murray, "Composition," 69, writes: "Attention to the current literature of the subject reveals, however, that there is hardly agreement at all regarding even elementary conclusions about Gregory's attitudes to contemporary politics." Specifically, compare, e. g., Wood, "Secret Histories"; Halsall, "Nero and Herod?"; Murray, "Composition," 75-76.

14 See especially, Wood, "Individuality."

conundrum that the more scholars realize how Gregory was a sophisticated litterateur who shaped his text, the more one is required to question whether it is possible to regard information gathered from his pages as reliable for understanding particular aspects of Gallic society.[15]

We have seen already how a longstanding deep-seated belief in a Gallic "dark age" rested in some measure on an equally enduring misreading of Gregory's literary capabilities. Although these traditional views have been overturned, a general maxim still applies: to continue advancing towards a more accurate understanding of late ancient Gallic society as a whole, it is necessary to get Gregory right. One component of the novel near-consensus on the writer that I believe deserves more scrutiny than it has received is the image of Gregory as theologian. Most who study late ancient Gaul would agree, I think, that Martin Heinzelmann has almost single-handedly carried the day in directing this concept for over thirty years. And while no one will argue that his decades of scholarly findings have proven brilliant, influential, and thought-provoking as a whole, it appears that of late the researcher has become increasingly convinced that not only Gregory's theology, but even his very program of composition, owes to the author's reliance on Augustine of Hippo's writings.[16] I will have occasion during the course of this book to challenge various elements for several of Heinzelmann's theories. For

15 Social historians continue to rise to the challenge of defending the use of Gregory's text to illuminate society. For example, it is clear how Gregory commonly fashioned his portrayal of certain individuals to make them reflect a particular moral theme. As Erin Dailey points out, however, this rarely prohibits one from drawing some conclusion about a facet of the bishop's society. Consider, for example, Gregory's scattered mentions of his own mother, Armentaria. When examining these one needs be conscious of how Gregory selectively privileged scenes that accentuated the woman acting as a pious Christian. But keeping this caveat in mind does not prevent one from assessing valuable facts such as where Armentaria lived after her husband died. Nor does it stop one from ascertaining a significant perspective Gregory held about his society, in this instance how he thought women ideally should conduct themselves after their spouses' decease. For Gregory's mother and his ideals about widowhood: Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 16-45.

16 Compare Heinzelmann's non-committal remarks on Augustinian influences at *Gregory of Tours* with those from his "Works of Gregory." In the former Heinzelmann writes: "There can be no doubt, without wanting (or being able) to postulate a direct dependence of Gregory on Augustine …, that the bishop of Tours had understood and adhered to the principles of history expressed by Augustine"; *Gregory of Tours*, 151. In a section of the later article entitled "The Design of the Entire Corpus: Eusebius and Augustine's City of God as Models" Heinzelmann declares that Gregory's work owed more to Augustine than to Eusebius; "Works of Gregory," 284, 287. To be clear, I am not entirely dismissing the possibility of Augustinian influences on Gregory. Speculations about the latter borrowing from the bishop of Hippo are nothing new: e. g., Krusch and Levison, eds., *MGH*, SRM 1.1, 7-8; de Nie, *Views*, 75; *Word, Image and Experience*, XVII; Carozzi, "Le Clovis de Grégoire," 182-84.

now, I simply will indicate my alternative concept: Gregory's corpus is not the result of Gregory's encounter with Augustinian literary musings; rather, it is a literary effort borne out of a gradual process of an individual seeking to give meaning to a lifetime of experiences in Gallic society. More specifically I propose to show how Gregory developed a sound, practical theology, which underpins his hagiographical and historical writings. This practical theology had its roots in Gregory's earliest years; it developed by virtue of successive encounters with influential individuals including parents, the pious, aristocratic power couple, Armentaria and Florentius; ecclesiastical relations such as Bishops Gallus of Clermont and Tetricus of Langres; Gregory's tutor, Avitus of Clermont; and visionaries like Sunniulf of Randau, Salvius of Albi, and Aredius of Limoges.

I propose to lay out my case for Gregory and his friends in the guise of an examination on a theme which gets to the heart of the bishop's writings, death and afterlife.[17] This book will consider how death acted as a catalyst for Gregory conducting his pastoral work, initiating his writing program, and imagining a Christian afterlife according to his own fashion. Drawing on material from the bishop's entire corpus, the book will venture to provide nuanced assessments for Gregory's thoughts about numerous characters depicted dying in his text.[18] I will have reason to regularly appeal to literary evidence from Gregory's near and actual contemporaries, particularly

17 Incidentally, and rather ironically, it was Heinzelmann's several brief references to Gregory using certain words to comment on the fates of particular individuals depicted dying in the *Historiae* which compelled me to start examining what if anything the bishop thought about people's afterlives. It seems only appropriate that irony should play its part in a work about a writer who really appreciated the concept, and used it to great effect in his pages.

Research on death and afterlife in late ancient societies has mushroomed in recent decades. For works on the topic, including several that take the writings of Gregory and his fellow Gauls into account: Harries, "Death and the Dead"; Amat, *Songes et Visions*; Bernstein, *Formation of Hell*; idem, *Hell and Its Rivals*; Bremmer, "Christian Hell"; idem, *Rise and Fall of the Afterlife*; Brown, *Ransom of the Soul*; Bynum, *Resurrection of the Dead*; Bynum and Freedman, eds., *Last Things*; Carozzi, *Le voyage de l'âme;* Effros, *Caring for Body and Soul*; Handley, *Death, Society, and Culture*; Moreira, *Heaven's Purge*; Paxton, *Christianizing Death*; Rebillard, *In hora mortis*; Russell, *History of Heaven*; Sicard, *La liturgie de la mort*; Moreira and Toscano, eds., *Hell and Afterlife*.

18 This study draws as much from Gregory's *Miracula* as from the *Historiae*. Scholarly usage of hagiography has revolutionized late ancient studies in recent decades. Gallic hagiographers differed widely in the degree of biographical material they opted to include when composing stories about holy exemplars. But as John Kitchen has indicated, Gregory, as it turns out, retained more biographical data for depictions of individual saints in his *vitae* than did others, such as his contemporary and friend, Venantius Fortunatus; Kitchen, *Saints' Lives*, 94. Gregory's relatively authentic approach in this matter is a fortuitous happenstance for historians investigating Gallic society.

Venantius Fortunatus, for context. I should stress up front that some part of this book will involve an unabashed element of what some may characterize as "intellectual biography."[19]

Because Gregory decided to write in large measure to persuade readers to abandon their sinful ways, he needed to be able to reach his audience.[20] Relatability, therefore, was of utmost importance. This is evidenced in the author's choice for his basic mode of communicating, to utilize the Latin vernacular of the day in an accessible prose.[21] Gregory's ultimate intended audience for his corpus was wide, including clerics and laity, rich and poor, men and women.[22] Despite abundant use of the humility topos, by which Gregory confessed to a faulty education and worried whether he was adequate to the task of rendering in writing the glories of saintly miracles, there was in fact no segment of society the author did not hope to reach.[23] Acknowledging that Gregory was a confident litterateur capable of influencing a broad audience makes sense in light of recent scholarly characterizations of Gallic society that have dispensed with past, overly bifurcated imaginings of distinct cultures, such as elite and commoner, pagan and Christian, and Roman and barbarian.

Late ancient society was not separated into two social tiers.[24] The commonality of social experiences for the rich and poor is evidenced by people's

On Gallic/Merovingian hagiography: e. g., Beaujard, *Le culte des saints*; Corbett, "Hagiography and the Experience"; Fouracre, "Merovingian History and Merovingian Hagiography"; Graus, *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger*; Heinzelmann, "L'hagiographie au service de l'histoire;" idem, "Der Funktion des Wunders"; idem, "Une source de base"; Goullet, Heinzelmann, and Veyrard-Cosme, eds., *L'hagiographie mérovingienne*; Poulin, *L'hagiographie bretonne*; Kreiner, *Social Life of Hagiography*. On hagiography and methodology: Lifshitz, "Beyond Positivism and Genre"; Turner, *Truthfulness, Realism, Historicity*, 25-74; Pratsch, "Exploring the Jungle."

19 For a critique of intellectual biographies on Gregory: Murray, "Composition," 74-77.

20 On edification in Gregory's works: Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 172-81.

21 Beumann, "Gregor von Tours," 81-89; Hen, *Roman Barbarians*, 6-10; Wright, "Columbanus's Epistulae," 32-39.

22 In the *Historiae* Gregory directly referenced, e. g., bishops: *Historiae* 10.31; kings: *Historiae* 5 prologue. The lessons of certain *vitae* of *VP* appear especially germane for practicing ascetics: e. g., *VP* 1, 15, 20. Others seem to be intended for audiences at saints' basilicas.

23 Gregory expected passages from the *Miracula* to be read before congregants at church services. For common people listening to Gregory's miracle stories: Van Dam, "Images of Saint Martin," 12-13. On audiences for hagiography: Van Uytfanghe, "L'audience de l'hagiographie"; idem, "L'hagiographie et son public." Like nearly all other forms of early Christian writing, Gregory's text has a communicative function; it would have been comprehensible to a broad segment of society. This implies that such works can be used to understand the audience's religious experiences. See Bailey, *Religious Worlds*, 8-10.

24 Van Dam, "Images of Saint Martin," 16-18; Hen, *Culture and Religion*, 18-20; Brown, *Cult of the Saints*, 12-22. Gregory's was not a world wherein society's elites exclusively dwelt on theology.

strategies to better their lot in life. For example, while Gallic elites improved and maintained their social station by acquiring secular offices in the regimes of kings, so too did individual, ambitious non-elites like Gregory's primary local nemesis, Count Leudast, who used his proximity to a royal court to climb from kitchen slave to count of Tours.[25] Likewise, just as some Gallic aristocrats, members of Gregory's family among them, aspired to the post of bishop to take leadership of their Christian communities and control the properties and funds churches were increasingly amassing, so too did numerous free (*ingenui*) and poor people (*pauperes*) jockey to fill many positions as low level clerics and thereby climb the ecclesiastical *cursus honorum*.[26]

Merovingian Gaul did not consist of two evenly distributed religions. By the late sixth century, Gaul was a fundamentally Christian world.[27] Unlike the literary models Gregory relied upon, such as Scripture, Sulpicius Severus's *Vita Martini* and Orosius's history, all of which denounced once socially prevalent paganisms, the bishop of Tours squarely set his sights on heretics and Jews as the only viable optional confessions remaining to confront orthodoxy.[28] Another potentially viable threat Gregory perceived were doubters within the orthodox camp. For example, in the last book of the *Historiae* the writer depicted himself having to defend the doctrine of bodily resurrection against one of his own priests![29]

Finally, Romans and barbarians are another category of peoples once perceived as drastically different whom today's scholars no longer view as groups foreign to one another by the sixth century. Gregory acknowledged

Neither was reverence for saints and relics a hallmark of popular religion that elites looked on with disdain. The practice among Gallic aristocrats of incorporating saints' cults into their efforts to control local ecclesiastical structures was already alive and well by the fifth century: Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*.

On the cult of saints: Beaujard, *Le culte des saints*; Brown, *Society and the Holy*; idem, *Cult of the Saints*; idem, "Enjoying the Saints"; Corbett, "Saint as Patron"; idem, "*Praesentium signorum munera*"; de Nie, *Poetics of Wonder*; Delehaye, *Sanctus: Essai sur le cultes*; Graus, *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger*; Hen, *Culture and Religion*, 82-120; Mitchell, "Saints and Public Christianity"; Van Dam, *Leadership and Community*; idem, *Saints*.

25 *Historiae* 5.48; Jones, *Social Mobility*, 105-14.

26 Ibid., 129-79. On the society's many low-level church-affiliated individuals who were neither ordained nor consecrated: Bailey, "Within and Without."

27 Hen, *Culture and Religion*, 154-206; idem, "Church in Sixth-Century Gaul," 234-37. Gaul's bishops only perceived lingering pagan practices as a threat in the late sixth century, not actual devotees to pagan gods; idem, "Paganism and Superstitions."

28 For Gregory's written approaches to heretics and Jews: Keely, "Arians and Jews."

29 *Historiae* 10.13. Also common to the society were skeptics of saints: Graus, *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger*, 451-55.

his own stock as "Roman" even while he realized full well that the western Empire disappeared in the previous century.[30] Late ancient societal changes in the west including the shift in political loyalties from imperial to barbarian royal families and also increased militarization among elites fostered conscious changes of ethnic identity among numerous individuals.[31] For example, while Gregory like many fellow southern Gallic aristocrats opted to continue accentuating descent from relatives bearing Roman senatorial status, his mother's uncle, who took the name Gundulf, participated in a trend among certain Gallic elites of adopting their kings' ethnicity. Ample evidence from Gregory and Fortunatus's corpuses confirms that Gallic high ecclesiastics and Frankish kings after two-hundred years of regular interaction had developed a relationship in which each relied on support of the other.[32] As for the kings, with whose courts the author was very familiar, they espoused an inclusive position that regardless of the multiplicity of identities the inhabitants of Gaul continued to profess, all were welcomed under the Merovingian family's tent.[33] As Edward James has illustrated, Gregory rarely referred to individuals as Franks, less so as his narrative approached contemporary events.[34] This is because it was not Gregory's priority to imagine his audience through an ethnic lens as Romans and barbarians; rather, it was his goal to fortify the faithful and reprove sinners, to usher souls to heaven and help them evade eternal torments in hell.[35]

30 Gregory identified elite persons of Roman ethnicity in Gaul by their native cities and families. While he did not distinguish contemporaries as "Roman" and "barbarian," his friend Venantius Fortunatus did. For the two writers' contrasting uses of ethnicity: Buchberger, *Shifting Ethnic Identities*, 107-46. Gregory and Fortunatus were similar, however, in how they rarely used the term *franci*, and both, each for his own literary purpose, avoided reference to the distant Frankish past; Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity*, 88-97. Gregory did not regard contemporary Byzantines as heirs to the "Romans." On Gregory and the Byzantines: Loseby, "Gregory of Tours."

31 Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 488-97. Before serving as a duke under Childebert II contemporaneously to his great-nephew's tenure as bishop of Tours, Gundulf acted as a *domesticus* for the Austrasian court. He probably assumed the name upon entering the court; ibid., 469. Alternatively, perhaps he adopted it even earlier in association with a prior military position for which we have no evidence.

32 Moore, *Sacred Kingdom*; Halfond, "All the King's Men."

33 Buchberger, *Shifting Ethnic Identities*, 182-86.

34 James, "Gregory of Tours," 56-59.

35 E. g., *VSJ* 13. Significantly, Helmut Reimitz recently has elaborated how Gregory's was a new kind of ecclesiastical history that devalued Roman history as well as Frankish history and identity in order to accentuate the centrality of God's *regnum*. Divorced from matters of ethnicity, "in Gregory's radical vision, individual striving for the kingdom of God was the only decisive criterion for belonging to [his Christian] community"; Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity*, 27-123, quoted at 122.

Breakdown of Chapters

This book is divided into two parts, I) Death, and II) Afterlife. The first section addresses the impact death had on Gregory from birth up to the crucial first years of his episcopacy, during which time be began writing the books that survive today. Part I illustrates how the distinctive pastoral underpinning of Gregory's writings resulted as much from the individual's upbringing and societal encounters as from readings of patristic literature, perhaps even more so. Each of the three chapters in Part I opens with a narrative that personifies Death (with a capital "D"). Chapter 1 reviews approximately the first eleven years of Gregory's life, up to the point when the boy endured a nearly fatal fever and vowed to become a cleric. The chapter considers how Gregory's parents, Armentaria and Florentius, along with his paternal uncle Gallus, bishop of Clermont, instilled in the youth the basics of acknowledging and trusting the saints. It was as a boy being reared in a lay household that Gregory began learning techniques for drawing on invisible holy powers in order to overcome difficult and even potentially deadly predicaments. Chapter 2 traces Gregory's early career up to the eve of him becoming a bishop. During these years, relatives, especially those from Gregory's maternal line, helped him further his skills for deciphering hidden mysteries and taught him to master aspects of the cult of saints which would benefit him in a society beset with sporadic dangers, not the least of which was ecclesiastical factionalism. This chapter also addresses how the cleric pursued a program of ecclesiastical studies which complemented and strengthened his effort to unearth invisible truths which lay hidden behind various this-worldly phenomena. Chapter 3 addresses how Gregory as a new bishop of Tours was just beginning to put into writing the miracles performed by that city's patron, Saint Martin, when his diocese was suddenly engulfed in one of the worst extended periods of violence in Merovingian history. It will be argued in this chapter that the concentrated death and destruction Gregory witnessed over four years compelled him to decide to complement his hagiography with history.[36] The chapter will investigate how Gregory promoted a distinctive, theologically consistent, saint-centered pastoral agenda in all of his writings. He encouraged readers and congregants to expiate their sins by confidently invoking saintly support and by developing a perfect faith. Gregory believed that all martyrs and confessors act as conduits for God's salvific power.

36 This argument in certain respects parallels that of Halsall, "Preface to Book V."

Part II focuses on the bishop's pastoral effort to save readers' souls by memorializing holy and wretched individuals. Gregory filled his books with moralizing messages imparted through images of people behaving piously or wickedly (or both) and then expiring in myriad ways. Chapter 4 briefly addresses how Gregory depicted saints and other righteous persons going to heaven. More space is spent considering how the writer interpreted evidence to ascertain the eternal loss of wicked people's souls. The chapter details how Gregory employed a deliberate vocabulary borrowed from his literary models to communicate to readers his own estimations about the salvation and condemnation of individuals' souls. Uncovering the invisible truth about people's eternal fates was a significant aspect of Gregory's theology and pastoral agenda. Analysis of his writings about afterlife reveals the author's belief in particular judgment, a form of judgment that people incurred immediately upon their decease. It shows how Gregory intended readers to examine the details he provided of certain individuals' behaviors, their demises, and signs associated with their deaths to participate in a deductive process similar to that which he already underwent in real time and to share his conclusions about characters' hereafters. The chapter establishes how Gregory was novel for his era in exhibiting a willingness to stigmatize in writing the condemnation of many peoples' souls. Chapter 5 deals with a subset of souls whose heavenly and infernal condition Gregory pondered, the Merovingians. The extensiveness of material about royal family members provides ample evidence to enable one to grasp how Gregory sought to deduce the eternal fates of some of the society's most prominent individuals. This chapter contributes to several lasting debates about Gregory's "true" thoughts about particular kings. Were Gregory's depictions of Clovis murdering his own relations intended to provide satirical examples of bad versus worse? Did Gregory imagine that the king who appointed him as bishop of Tours lost his soul? Did he really think Chilperic was a new Herod and Nero? The book ends by considering several matters left unattended to by virtue of Gregory dying prior to completing most of his books. In Chapter 6 it is argued that the author probably was far from finished writing when he expired. The chapter addresses what Gregory may have had in mind to record about Queens Fredegund and Brunhild and King Guntram in *Historiae* 10. The chapter concludes with a few brief suggested directions for subsequent research on the bishop of Tours.

Part I

Death

1. Peering into the Invisible World

Death is as impactful in the present as it was in the ancient world. And yet, as Patrick Geary stressed in the intro to *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages*, we moderns handle the phenomenon in a way foreign to ancient approaches. Whereas the present tendency is to minimize death, ancient peoples insisted on remaining intimate with the dead.[1] Gregory of Tours perfectly exemplifies Geary's point, as his family raised him from earliest youth to embrace the "very special dead" as helpful patrons for the living.[2] One salient benefit young Gregory perceived through the tutelage of kin was an assurance that saints would act to save him and others from deadly circumstances. This chapter will consider one of two major influences that went into shaping Gregory into the somewhat idiosyncratic bishop and author he became: early examples of his family's religious conduct.[3] I have opted to open this chapter, as well as the others for Part I, with a brief narrative that emphasizes how Death (with a capital D) played a leading role in shaping our protagonist's career and fostering his conviction that Christian society in Gaul required the saints' involvement. My decision to personify Death in the narratives of this section mimics the bishop's own jeu d'esprit. For while Gregory's literary agenda was earnest – after all, he perceived the eternal condition of readers' souls to hang in the balance – this did not stop him from applying the occasional creative touch to his writings. In at least two instances Gregory personified Death as a willful being who possessed agency.[4] The bishop's contemporary, Venantius Fortunatus, also sometimes personified Death in his poetry, and of course the practice was not without biblical precedent.[5] Gregory consistently portrayed Death as a menacing foe, or otherwise a neutral to negative event, which again coincided with Fortunatus's common images of the figure as angry, hateful, grasping and threatening.[6] Decades before the poet ever lent any influence to Gregory as

1 Geary, *Living with the Dead*, 1-3.

2 For the term: Brown, *Cult of the Saints*, 69-85.

3 For the second major influence, Gregory's clerical education, see Chapter 2, which also considers further familial lessons.

4 *VSM* 1.32, 2.1. These examples will be covered in the narratives of Chapters 2 and 3.

5 E. g., Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmina* preface 2; 4.4.3-4. Biblical personifications of Death: e. g., 1 Corinthians 15:25, 15:55, Romans 7.24, Revelation 6.7-8, 20:14.

6 E. g., Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmina* preface 2 (*avara mors*), 4.2.2 (*mors inimica*), 4.5.1 (*invida mors*), 4.5.1 (*miniteris*), 4.12.3 (*furit ira … mortis*), 9.2.9 (*Mors … vorax*). Gregory did not portray Death benefiting humans as, for example, by separating the human soul from imprisonment in the body, an approach taken by the Neo-Platonically inspired Ambrose of Milan in his tract

litterateur, it was the latter's relatives who began the prerequisite work of turning the youth into a devotee of the saints. As family members taught the child to interpret certain this-worldly occurrences as visible manifestations of God and His saints' invisible powers and will, Death impacted much that happened in their lives.

Death and the Little Boy

Before he ever picked up a book young Gregory began to learn a lesson inescapable in the ancient world, that life and death are utterly intertwined. This experience had two sides to it: not only are life and death proximate, they can even be identical. Death can equate to birth. Those responsible for first instilling these notions in the boy were his closest relations. Prior to Gregory's birth, Death had frequently spent time stirring up difficulties in his parents' homelands, Burgundy and the Auvergne. For many years heading into the mid-530s the armies of three surviving sons of the great Frankish warrior-king Clovis campaigned in southern and eastern Gaul.[7] In 534 two of the brothers, Kings Chlothar I and Childebert I, led soldiers into Burgundy, the birthplace of Gregory's mother, Armentaria, where they chased out the last Burgundian royal holdout and finished the Frankish takeover of the region.[8] A year earlier, Prince Theudebert, Clovis's eldest grandson by his eldest son, Theuderic, was campaigning in Provence when he received word that his father lay ill. The prince immediately realized the peril posed by his land-craving uncles, Chlothar and Childebert.[9] While hurriedly marching to the north, Theudebert placed his wife and newly born daughter at Clermont, the principal city of the Auvergne, Gregory's father's homeland. Death did in fact take Theuderic, and sure enough Chlothar and Childebert teamed up to grab their nephew's lands. By then, however, Theudebert had long shown himself to be a capable military commander,

De bono mortis. Rather, his imagination in this regard was more akin to that of Augustine, who despite his own considerable Neo-Platonic influences interpreted physical demise as an unfortunate occurrence; see Cavadini, "Ambrose and Augustine."

7 Death already had claimed a fourth of Clovis's successors, King Chlodomer, in 523; *Historiae* 3.6.

8 *Historiae* 3.11. See Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 31-35. For Gregory's confusion regarding events prior to his birth: Wood, "Clermont and Burgundy." On Burgundy in general: Favrod, *Histoire politique*; Kaiser, *Der Burgunder*.

9 Theudebert's suspicions were warranted. In the wake of Chlodomer's death, Chlothar and Childerbert personally eliminated two of their brother's sons; *Historiae* 3.18.

and so he was able to secure the support of his father's military leaders and maintain his patrimony intact.[10] By virtue of this outcome, Gregory's nuclear family would materialize in Theudebert's sub-kingdom.[11]

Armentaria and Florentius married around 534 in what must have been an arranged union of landed aristocratic fortunes. In addition to both parties hailing from prominent lineages that boasted senatorial ancestries, the duo also had relatives that included bishops and avid lay participants in what by the sixth century had become a common late ancient social practice of promoting saints' cults.[12] A somewhat peculiar commonality for these products of Burgundy and the Auvergne is that relatives of both newlyweds had held the bishopric at Tours.[13] After her nuptials Armentaria abandoned Burgundy for her husband's homeland. There, within approximately three years she gave birth to three children, Peter, an anonymous daughter, and Georgius Florentius – Gregory probably only added his third name, "Gregorius," years later after becoming a cleric.[14]

Young Gregory will have garnered something of the ancient assumption about the interconnectedness between life and death as soon as he was able to acknowledge his own birthday, November 30, probably in 538.[15] If the year remains slightly conjectural, the day is not; Gregory was born on the anniversary of the Apostle Andrew "exhaling his spirit" (*spiritum exalaret*) after hanging on a cross for three days in a constant state of prayer.[16] By

10 *Historiae* 3.23.

11 On the usually divided nature of the Merovingian realm: Ewig, *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien*, 114-71.

12 Armentaria's family lands apparently included estates around Lyons, Langres, and Dijon. One of her grandfathers claimed senatorial status, while a second one, her eventual son Gregory's namesake, was a longtime count at Autun before becoming the bishop of Langres; *VP* 7.1-2. Florentius's father was Georgius, a senator of Clermont. Gregory's original names, Georgius Florentius, came from his paternal grandfather and father. Georgius's wife Leocadia was the dauhter of Leocadius, a senator of Bourges. See Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 7-22.

13 Gregory claimed he was related to all but five of his episcopal predecessors at Tours: *Historiae* 5.49. Ralph Mathisen tested the assertion; his prosopographical analysis indicated most of the bishops at Tours may have been Auvergnians. Two fifth-century bishops of Tours, however, Justinian and Arment[ar]ius, possibly were from his mother's family; Mathisen, "Family of Georgius Florentius Gregorius." Also on the claim: Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 23-28. For individuals named Armentarius possibly related to Gregory: Mathisen, "Family of Georgius Florentius Gregorius," 92-93 n 10.

14 Gregory was called "Gregorius" by the time he was a deacon: Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 32.

15 Birthday: *MA* 38; year: Van Dam, *Saints*, 225 n 44, 264 n 77; Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 38.

16 Andrew's death: *MA* 36.

the sixth century late ancient Christians long had accepted the notion that martyrs attain salvation at the moment of death. Gregory, therefore, internalized his birthday as falling on the same day as Andrew's heavenly rebirth.[17] The child's ruminations over this coincidence of births apparently instilled a lasting sense of closeness in Gregory's mind, for of the many dozens of holy people eventually memorialized in his writings, Andrew was one of only a handful for whom the author characterized himself as an *alumnus*.[18] Gregory's special regard for this particular martyr, like his general preoccupation with the martyrs and confessors, ranks among those lingering passions that he cultivated by emulating the example of his saint-obsessed family members.

No sooner had Gregory been born, the ancient inescapability of Death's proximity to life struck Armentaria and her kin in 539 when the mother of three learned of the expiration of her grandfather, Bishop Gregory of Langres.[19] Succeeding to the cathedra at Langres was one of that bishop's three sons (Armentaria's paternal uncle), Tetricus.[20] The latter straightaway set about asserting that his own father's death occasioned the blessed man's immediate rebirth in heaven.[21] Whenever young Georgius Florentius was old enough to finally venture to Burgundy and meet Bishop Tetricus, his maternal family members undoubtedly began impressing upon the youth the sanctity of his heaven-dwelling great-grandfather. The latter was the single recently deceased relation presently being promoted as a saint during Gregorius Florentius' early youth and adolescence. One suspects Armentaria was behind the eventual application of her son's final moniker, Gregorius. Whence applied, Gregory's name, like his birthday, gave him further reason to reflect on how he was inescapably associated with the living dead.

Georgius Florentius was not yet Gregorius when Death impinged heavily upon southern Gaul in 543, when the bubonic plague first struck the region. Death selected Arles and its surrounding districts to introduce the

17 Almost a century and a half prior to Gregory's birth, another native Gallic aristocratic, Paulinus of Nola, famously commemorated the anniversary of the martyr Felix's passion by composing "birthday poems" (*natalicia*).

18 *MA* 38. Further attesting to Gregory's enduring affection for his birth-saint is the fact that he devoted an entire composition to Andrew. For the *MA* Gregory produced a less ornate version of an extant *Vita Andreae*, presumably to extend awareness of the saint's powers to a wider audience.

19 *VP* 7.3.

20 *VP* 7.4. The older Gregory served as count forty years and developed a reputation as effective in the capture of prisoners. He became bishop only after his wife Armentaria's death; *VP* 7.1-2.

21 For topoi associated with bishops' deaths: Scheibelreiter, "Death of the Bishop."

affliction to the Gallic populace.[22] Because Gregory was at the tender age of approximately four years old, perhaps his relations initially spared him the frightful details about this novel disease which caused swelling in the groin before it inflicted an excruciating demise. Still, Gregory would have felt terror enough whenever his relatives eventually did inform him how the disease had ravaged the people living to the south and then encroached towards his homeland. At the same time that he listened to these harrowing details, however, Gregory also learned the promising news of how his own maternal and paternal relations acted decisively in the face of the deadly threat. Amid rumors of the plague's advance inhabitants throughout the Auvergne apparently had begun marking the walls of houses and churches with symbols in hopes of fending off the disease. At that point Armentaria experienced a frightening dream wherein the wine kept in her house's cellar turned into blood. While fearing that this image presaged the malady striking her household, the woman was visited in a dream by a man who reminded her that the next day was the feast day for Saint Benignus. The man, who was the saint himself, promised Armentaria she would remain safe if she kept vigils all night on the saint's behalf and celebrated mass. Gregory's mother did as instructed, and so, although her family's abode lacked the protective markings the others displayed, the plague did not assail them.[23]

While Armentaria was girding her house against the approaching epidemic, Gregory's father's brother, Bishop Gallus of Clermont, took official action appropriate to his office to ward off the onslaught. Gallus himself later explained to Gregory that after he prayed repeatedly for God to stay the pestilence, he was visited by the Angel of the Lord, who declared that by virtue of the prelate's strident prayers he and his people would be spared the plague at the present time and for eight years to come. Afterwards Gallus instituted a series of penitential prayers along with an annual procession, Rogations, scheduled during the middle of Lent.[24] This pilgrimage directed the faithful 65 kilometers southwards to the basilica of the martyr, Saint Julian of Brioude. Gallus demanded that his congregants humbly make the trek on foot and to the accompaniment of psalms.[25] Accordingly, Death did not presume to accost the Auvergne; instead it remained content to sate itself upon the Arelesians' lives.

22 On the earliest appearance of bubonic plague: Stoclet, "*Consilia humana*"; Little, "Life and Afterlife"; Biraben and Le Goff, "Plague in the Early Middle Ages."

23 *GC* 50.

24 On Rogations: Bailey, *Religious Worlds*, 113-15.

25 *VP* 6.6; *Historiae* 4.5.

Fascinatingly, during this plague of 543 Gregory's mother and uncle each appealed to a martyr whose cults their respected families had already been promoting. Armentaria's grandfather Gregory in his lifetime had been instrumental in initiating the cult of the Burgundian martyr Benignus, while Gallus almost two decades prior to the plague had already pinned his hopes on Julian's protection during a moment of duress.[26] The energy these aristocrats expended in 543, and the subsequent stories they repeatedly told, may be viewed in part as premeditated efforts to extend (especially in Armentaria's case) the influence of cults for their respective regions' saints. By these exertions they along with neighbors and relations could benefit materially through increased pilgrim traffic. The pair's actions equally attest to the trust that each readily submitted to the already proven protective power of a given martyr when faced with an utterly terrifying prospect, be it the deaths of one's own children or the mass extermination of one's flock.

Within a few years following the plague, Death payed an unexpected visitation to one of Armentaria and Florentius' brood while the couple were in the midst of another pilgrimage to Julian's basilica, this one during late August in celebration of the martyr's passion. Florentius probably had been participating in this ceremonial trek many years prior to him bringing the wife and kids along to join in the village's festival.[27] Our author's recollections of two such jaunts indicate that he maintained a deep nostalgia for these family outings; the trips were marked by gleeful anticipation. Gregory remembered: "Along with his entire household my father hurried to enjoy these celebrations," and again, "we were again hurrying with great happiness to the holy church…"[28] During one such excursion, however, Death interrupted the frivolity when Gregory's elder brother Peter became so ill with a fever it was feared he might die.[29] What was usually a happy hike became an anxious undertaking. When the family finally arrived at Brioude, all entered the church and prayed before the saint's tomb. Peter's initial request for the martyr to heal him resulted in his fever abating somewhat. After the youth had himself brought into the

26 On Gregory of Langres' "invention" of Benignus's cult: Wood, "Early Merovingian Devotion," 74-75.

27 If the family's usual residence during Gregory's earliest years was at Clermont or at an estate just east of the city in the Allier valley, perhaps the patriarch used the occasion of the festivities at Brioude to check on lands the family owned further south. On the Allier valley: Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 29.

28 *VSJ* 24, 25; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 180.

29 Gregory did not personify disease, Morbus, although one of his favorite sources, Prudentius, did; e. g., Prudentius, *Cathemerinon* 10.105-08, following Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.275.

basilica a second time for vigils, he lay overnight before the tomb asking the saint's aid. Finally Peter was administered dust from the martyr's tomb, either mixed with water or placed around his neck, and he fully recovered.[30] According to Gregory, a similar scenario happened the following year while Florentius again was leading his family on the annual pilgrimage. As they were marching, a sunstroke caused Gregory to contract a debilitating headache and fever. After three days of suffering the boy stopped at a shrine of Julian's holy associate, Saint Ferreolus, located just shy of Brioude. Little Gregory next pressed on to the nearby spring where Julian had been decapitated. He put his head under the salutary rushing waters and immediately recovered. The family completed the pilgrimage to Julian's basilica where Gregory thanked the martyr for his early healing.[31] Unlike the distress his brother Peter had experienced the year before, there is no indication that Gregory felt threatened by Death during his ordeal. Nevertheless, the episode reveals how the example of family members countering potentially fatal and frightful circumstances with faithful reliance on saintly *virtutes* had completely won over the impressionable youngster during his first decade of life.

Gregory's family may have worried that Death was threatening a member of the household again when Florentius experienced two painfully debilitating episodes of gout accompanied by fever.[32] His suffering undoubtedly raised concern among his wife and dependents. Not only was the father responsible for his nuclear family's wellbeing, as the eldest layman of the familial line – his brother was preoccupied with episcopal duties – Florentius probably tended to managing all of the extended family's Auvergnian estates. Witnessing the proud patriarch, the principal model of *virtus* (in this instance "manliness" as opposed to "saintly power") must have generated deep anxiety for young Gregory. In his writings he recalled how on the first occasion, while the father lay in bed hurting, an angel appeared in a dream and asked the boy if he had read the Book of Joshua. Gregory explained that he was still only learning his letters and did not know the book.[33] The dream-angel then instructed him to write the letters of the name on a wood chip and put it beneath his father's pillow. When Gregory awoke the next morning

30 *VSJ* 24.

31 *VSJ* 25.

32 *VP* 14.3. Gout results from a continued buildup of uric acid and frequently recurs in ever worsening painful bouts. Hippocrates and Galen regarded gout to be fatal, but this outlook was not universally held among ancient physicians; Copeman, *Short History of the Gout*, 21-37.

33 Gregory claimed he was learning to read at eight years old; *VP* 8.2. These dream episodes presumably happened around this age; see Heinzelmann, "Gregory of Tours: Elements," 21.

he asked his mother what he should do. Armentaria instructed her son to obey the vision, which he did, and afterwards Florentius recovered fully. A year later the father again took to bed with the same affliction. Gregory reported that at night the same angel appeared, asking if the boy knew the Book of Tobit. The youth responded he had not read it (had he started learning to read at this point?). The angel instructed that Gregory should do what the son of a blind man had done in that account, specifically to cause smoke from the burnt heart and liver of a fish to engulf the afflicted area and thereby produce a cure.[34] Again, Gregory followed the dream-visitor's advice, and Florentius recovered.

One gathers from our author's handful of references to Florentius that Gregory had a deep reverence and need for his father; the son desperately tended to the patriarch when the latter lay bedridden, moaning in anguish. Gregory obviously held dear what memories he retained of him with Florentius, as is attested by the aforementioned reminiscences of them hastening *cum magno gaudio* to participate in the paradisiacal celebrations in the church at Brioude.[35] There may have been other fatherly-led excursions during Gregory's early years as well. For example, our author recalled that when he was about eight years old, he visited Burgundy and sat upon the bed of the priest Nicetius (Armentaria's maternal uncle).[36] On this and perhaps even earlier visitations to Nicetius, Gregory well may have joined with other young children whom the priest was teaching to read, memorize, and sing the psalms in order to "perform the antiphons and the prayers, and ensure that devotion might importune the soul."[37] All of this safe and happy traveling across the Auvergne and as far as Burgundy, plus the joyous singing of psalms and celebrations of saints' festivals, suggests that aside from his relatives' several brushes with Death, young Gregory may have enjoyed something close to an idyllic childhood during his first ten years or so.[38]

34 The angel's directions to Gregory in fact did not perfectly mirror the actions which the dutiful son provided his father, Tobit; Moreira, *Dreams, Visions*, 84.

35 For churches as places where pilgrims could momentarily imagine themselves experiencing paradise: Van Dam, *Saints*, 128.

36 Gregory also dated this visit to the time when he was starting to learn to read. Therefore, it is very possible Florentius was still alive when it happened. Indeed, it may have occurred in one of the same years when the boy healed his father's gout. It is possible, of course, that Florentius did not accompany Gregory on this particular visit to the in-laws.

37 *VP* 8.2; trans. by James, *Life*, 51. For identification of Chalon as Nicetius' residence while he was a priest: Heinzelmann, "Gregory of Tours: Elements," 21, n. 49. Alternatively, Van Dam, *Saints*, 52, suspects Florentius was already dead when the events of this anecdote happened.

38 Contrast unwarranted extrapolations such as the idea that the child Gregory had an "obviously sickly constitution"; Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 30. Heinzelmann, ibid., 29, similarly

The ability for the aristocratic family to traipse safely over southern Gaul reminds how it was not just the saints who prevented Death from impinging more frequently on residents of the Auvergne during the 540s; King Theudebert, too, did much to keep Death distant during those years. The mighty Theudebert, unlike his father, apparently directed his troops away from the family's homeland. In fact, the only campaigns of Theudebert that Gregory highlighted were those fought outside Gaul versus the Ostrogoths in Italy.[39] A grateful Gregory as author likely was echoing sentiments that many Auvergnats regularly declared during the 540s: Theudebert was a *magnus rex*.[40] Then Death. In 548 Theudebert took to his sick bed for an extended period; he expired in his fourteenth year of rule.[41] Succeeding the king was his young son Theudebald, who was no Theudebert.[42] Next, perhaps in the same year, or maybe a year or two thereafter, Florentius died. The patriarch's younger son would have been approximately ten or eleven years old when this happened. It is one of those maddening "Gregory-things" that our author offered no mention of his father's demise.

Death's removal of Florentius brought a swift end to the family's united Auvergnian interlude. Armentaria eventually would move back to her maternal homeland, Burgundy. Likewise, we next see Peter living in the household of Bishop Tetricus at Langres in Burgundy. One episode that may date to the period after Florentius's death but prior to Armentaria's relocation involves a mass that the mother and son attended in honor of the martyr Polycarp, held in the village of Riom near Clermont. Gregory referred to himself in the anecdote as *in adolescentia mea* but he did not present himself acting in the capacity of a cleric.[43] Indeed, for all of his parental upbringing that instilled a habit of relying on saintly *virtutes* in the face of adversities, there is nothing to suggest that Florentius and

characterizes Florentius as "sickly" based off of the evidence of one childhood illness and two bouts of gout late in his life.

39 *Historiae* 3.32. Gregory did share a tale of one abortive campaign in Gaul in which Theudebert and Childebert joined forces to attack Chlothar. The conflict was averted when the aggressors were pummeled during a storm caused by Saint Martin and Clovis's pious widow, Clotild; *Historiae* 3.29. Gregory's emphasis on Theudebert's wars versus foreign *gentes* contrasts with the author's considerations of the violent episodes Theudebert's father, Theuderic, waged in Gaul during the 520s, including an assault on the Auvergne.

40 *Historiae* 3.25. Gregory's reasons for calling the king *magnus* differ from that I have provided here. We will look at the author's estimation of Theudebert's character and fate at pp. 224-29.

41 *Historiae* 3.36.

42 *Historiae* 3.37.

43 *GM* 85.

Armentaria ever intended Gregory to become a cleric. Recognition of this fact brings to the fore the leading role Death played in impacting the boy's life-altering decisions.

Florentius may have been deceased little more than a year, if that, when Death revisited the Auvergne. Gallus was still the bishop of Clermont (thus this happened prior to April 551) and Gregory was *in adolescentia* when he suffered a protracted illness.[44] The only family members reportedly present to comfort the boy were Gallus and Armentaria. The lack of mention of Florentius here almost assuredly means the father had already expired. Furthermore, the remark that his uncle checked in on him *plerumque* indicates the child probably was residing in Clermont at the time. Gregory described the disease in this way: "My stomach was filled with a great quantity of phlegm, and I was seized by a very strong fever."[45] Severity of pain and a heightened distress may have caused the boy to request that he be taken to Saint Illidius's basilica in the city.[46] That servants had to carry him to the church suggests Gregory was enfeebled to the point of being unable to walk.[47] When placed before the saint's tomb the youth's initial prayers and tears provided some comfort, as had happened for Peter when he had first prayed while lying before Saint Julian's tomb. Unlike his brother's illness, however, Gregory's fever returned after he went home. Within days the fever became so intense it was thought he would expire. His mother arrived and compassionately remarked: "Today, my sweet son, I will be full of sadness, for you are so ill."[48] In contrast to Armentaria's sorrowful words, Gregory responded: "Please don't be sad, but send me to the tomb of the blessed bishop Illidius, for I believe and I trust that his virtue will find happiness for

44 Isidore indicated two stages for childhood, during which times humans are not suited for procreation: *infantia* (ages 0 to 6 years) and *pueritia* (7 to 14). *Adolescentia* (15 to 28) for Isidore connoted early adulthood; Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* 11.2:1-8. Gregory employed no such precision when referencing his own *adolecentia*. The range of years includes age eight (*VP* 8.2), around age eleven for his deadly illness (*VP* 2.2), and approximately age thirteen to fifteen (*GM* 85).

45 *VP* 2.2; trans. by James, *Life*, 14, slightly emended (Gregory's references to himself converted from third to first person).

46 As a writer looking back on the incident, Gregory imagined that God had instilled in him a desire to go to Illidius's basilica. Avitus, Gregory's eventual mentor and the bishop of Clermont after that, enlarged this church after 571. At the time of Gregory's illness, Illidius's tomb was in a crypt. Gregory described the earlier church as narrow and hard to move through. Furthermore, the saint's bones were housed in a wooden sarcophagus; *VP* 2.4.

47 That servants carried Gregory lends further credence to the likelihood he was residing in the city at the time.

48 *VP* 2.2; trans. by James, *Life*, 14.

you and health for me."[49] After again being placed before the holy tomb the youth offered a prayer to Christ wherein he vowed that if the saint healed him of the affliction he would immediately become a cleric. Contrary to this written portrayal of him confidently placing his trust in Illidius's *virtus*, young Gregory in actuality may have been so fearful of dying, he felt taking the extreme measure of turning his life over to the church was the only action which could possibly secure his survival.[50] Soon after completing this prayer the boy's fever started to abate. After returning home and resting in bed the malady fully abandoned the child's body along with a nose-bleed.[51]

Gregory provided no further mention in his writings about this momentous, life-altering event.[52] It is interesting that in this particular case of illness, the child did not follow what might have already become his usual recourse, to seek divine aid at Saint Julian's basilica. Perhaps this illness actually disabled and discouraged him to the point he dared not risk traveling the long distance to Brioude. Maybe he along with his proximate relatives so feared for his life, they felt compelled to request the succor of the nearest acceptable entombed saint. Gregory probably was around eleven years old when he vowed to become a cleric in exchange for Illidius saving him. Keeping one's vows, especially those made to Christ and His saints, would remain a significant expectation for the youngster, who, even as a layman and the son of a lay couple, had been reared to respond to a saint's help as faithfully as when one invoked it.[53] Illidius's benevolent act of retrieving the tender youth from the impending crush of Death's jaws around 549/550 confirmed for Gregory the truth of his parents' promises about the guaranteed presence of saints like no other miracle could have. The remainder of this chapter will address other beliefs, habits and behaviors associated with the cult of saints that relatives imbued in the boy during his formative first years.

49 *VP* 2.2; trans. by James, *Life*, 14. Gregory's unambiguous assurance to his mother signifies a faith confident in its ability to "move mountains." The wording in fact conforms to the author's mature theology, for which, see below, pp. 135-39.

50 It is also possible that the distraught Armentaria and/or Gallus helped convince the boy to take this vow. On Gregory's sense of fear: Moreira, *Heaven's Purge*, 73.

51 This image of the fever departing with the flow of blood from his nose is reminiscent of Gregory's descriptions of the release of bodily fluids during exorcisms.

52 In comparison, Gregory offered no details at all about his elevation as deacon, and he was circumspect about his selection as bishop. On the circumstances surrounding these last two cases, see pp. 55, 58-59 (deacon), 89-90 (bishop).

53 On the development of western Christian approaches to oathtaking in the context of late Roman bishops' concerns over a perceived failure to effectively administer justice: Uhalde, *Expectations of Justice*, 77-104.

Becoming Gregory I

Gregory's relations were responsible for implanting in the youth the same zeal for saints that they possessed. Because the child was raised in the Auvergne, the examples of male relatives from that region, father Florentius and uncle Gallus, may have equaled that of Gregory's beloved mother in the years prior to the him becoming a cleric. Perhaps the most basic practice the Auvergnat brothers imparted to Gregory was simply how to avow identification with a saint. Just as Gregory acknowledged a special relationship with the Apostle Andrew by virtue of the pair sharing "birthdays," so did Florentius and Gallus similarly associate themselves with early heroes of the Gallic Christian church, in their case through descent. Through their mother's line the pair claimed as an ancestor Vettius Epagathus, one of the renowned martyrs of Lyons whose passion Eusebius of Caesarea famously had preserved in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*.[54] Another worthy ancestor from the same family line was a senator named Leocadius, who was attributed with allowing his house to become the first church at Bourges.[55] Gregory's inclusion of anecdotes about Vettius Epagathus and Leocadius in *Historiae* 1 not only indicates that the parochial author adopted his paternal family's practice of identifying with Gallic Christian heroes; it further reveals how he elevated his reputed ancestors as characters central to the very process of Gaul becoming part of the narrative of a worldwide salvation history. Of course, the most consequential of Gallus' and Florentius's affiliations with a saint was not with a relative at all, but rather that with the martyr of Brioude.

Young Gregory learned the rudiments of promoting a saint's cult from Gallus and Florentius.[56] Julian's cult was in no way developed to the point of those for luminaries such as Saints Martin of Tours and Hilary of Poitiers. The brothers appear to have been the principal advocates for declaring the rural martyr's *virtutes* during the early sixth century, and the most socially prestigious ones.[57] Earlier notable aristocratic interaction with the cult in-

54 *VP* 6.1. For the martyrs of Lyons: Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.1; Gregory's versions of the story: *GM* 48; *Historiae* 1.29. Gregory would have read Rufinus' Latin translation of Eusebius.

55 *Historiae* 1.31.

56 For Gregory's family promoting Julian's cult: Van Dam, *Saints*, 45-48; Shanzer, "So Many Saints," 29-30.

57 Julian reportedly earned the martyr's crown (late third- to early fourth-century) when a Roman emperor had him decapitated. Vienne claimed the head, which came to rest in the tomb of Saint Ferreolus, while Brioude claimed the body. A woman reportedly built the first stone shrine over the martyr's tomb to accomplish a vow made after Julian answered her prayer and saved her husband, whom the emperor Magnus Maximus had condemned to die; *Passio Iuliani*

cluded the burial in 456 of the Auvergnat nobleman turned Roman Emperor Avitus alongside the martyr's grave, and a Duke Victorius's contribution of columns to the construction effort that saw completion of the enlarged basilica.[58] But as Raymond Van Dam has shown, bishops of Clermont ranging from Sidonius Apollinaris in the late fifth century to Gallus's predecessor, Quintianus, along with contemporary secular notables, bypassed Brioude as they otherwise embellished Clermont's saintly credentials.[59] Julian's became a "cow-cult"; the martyr was charged to diligently monitor collectors of the "pasture tax" lest they take more than their due.[60]

Enter Gallus and Florentius. Before Gregory's uncle became bishop, when King Theuderic's soldiers were brutalizing the Auvergne around 524, Gallus the cleric sought Julian's protection in a moment of extreme crisis. His properties had been ruined by the king's soldiery, causing him to venture to Brioude. One suspects Gallus' and Florentius's family possessed substantial lands around the village. While walking barefoot Gallus stepped on a mass of thorns. One barb lodged deep in his foot and the wound soon became infected. Gallus kept vigils at Julian's basilica and after a deep night's sleep he awoke to find the spur lying in the covers and the pain fully vanished. The cleric duly interpreted this event as a miracle wrought by the martyr.[61] Our author recollected how his uncle used to show off the telltale scar while imparting this story about Julian's healing *virtus*. This episode bespeaks the contribution Gallus made towards the impressionable youth's growing habit of viewing a

2-4. This anecdote suspiciously recalls Sulpicius Severus's presentation of Saint Martin opposing the same emperor; Sulpcius Severus, *Vita Martini* 20; *Dialogi* 3.11.

58 Emperor Avitus: *Historiae* 2.11. Duke Victorius: *Historiae* 2.20. At Vienne, Bishop Mamertus in the fifth century translated Julian's severed head along with Saint Ferreolus' pristine (but headless) corpse to a new church he built in the city.

59 Van Dam, *Saints*, 43-44.

60 *VSJ* 17. Dedications of livestock including cows, horses, pigs, and bulls were led into the church amid the congregants: *VSJ* 31. On the rural nature of Julian's cult: Van Dam, *Saints*, 44-45, who writes: "At Tours or Poitiers fires gutted the cathedral, churches, or houses; at Brioude a fire in a haystack killed sheep and horses"; ibid., 45. For Brioude as a "backwater": Wood, "Ecclesiastical Politics," 41.

61 *VSJ* 23. This episode likely pertains to the 524 campaign which Gregory frequently mentions in the corpus: *GM* 51; *Historiae* 12-13; *VSJ* 13; *VP* 4.2; Wood, "Clermont and Burgundy," 121-25. Both the chapter heading and last sentence of the anecdote seem clear about the event happening shortly before Gallus became bishop in 525. Alternatively, for a date of around 531 /532: Rouche, *L'Aquitaine des Wisigoths*, 54-57; Heinzelmann, "Gallische Prosopographie," 703. For a theory that Gregory confused two invasions and that this episode happened when Clovis sent Theuderic to Clermont in 507: Van Dam, *Saints*, 179-80 n. 17.

lasting visible mark to constitute a sign of some prior action committed by heavenly powers.[62]

One well-established activity that instilled reverence for the saints which Gallus and Florentius encouraged Gregory to perform was to participate in pilgrimage.[63] Florentius probably started taking his children to Brioude at a tender age, well before the occurrence of Peter's nearly fatal fever during one such pilgrimage. It is highly probable that the layman had begun journeying to Brioude for the martyr's annual festival well before he married and started his family around 534.[64] Economic benefit assuredly accompanied pilgrim traffic for the regions to which it was directed. But one wonders whether anyone besides local farmers and shepherds regularly joined Florentius's mob in the yearly late August *solemnitates*. Gregory provided an account in the *VSJ*, chronologically out of place, which attributed the community's discovery of the proper date for Julian's feast day (August 28) to the famous fifth-century bishop, Saint Germanus of Auxerre.[65] Well before Bishop Gregory's literary effort to publicize the proper date for the August pilgrimage and festival, his uncle Gallus used his episcopal position to enhance potential pilgrims' familiarity with the rural Auvergnat shrine by inaugurating the Rogations pilgrimage to Julian's basilica midway through the Lenten season. One wonders how many among the grandees of many-churched Clermont bristled about insertion into the city's liturgical calendar of this trek, 65 kilometers to rural "nowhere" and blatantly advantageous to the bishop's family. Regardless, the Lenten pilgrimage must have constituted something of a boon for the village. Even Gallus's successor, Bishop Cautinus, who apparently had no love for Gregory and his kin, maintained his predecessor's prescribed sacred obligation.[66] Gregory's remembrance of his uncle Gallus in the *Historiae* and the *Vita Galli* will have played a role similar to that of Clermont's ritual calendar by contributing a permanent reminder to the Auvergnat people that they should be ever grateful, since it was Gallus's holiness that had spared them from the plague's depredations in 543.[67]

62 Similarly, a permanent scar on the face of Nicetius of Lyons bore witness to Saint Martin healing him during childhood: *VP* 8.1.

63 On pilgrimage: Van Dam, *Leadership and Community*, 249-55; idem, *Saints*, 116-49; Pietri, *La ville de Tours*, 588-99.

64 On the significance of lay participation in late ancient religious processions: Bailey, *Religious Worlds*, 111-12.

65 *VSJ* 29. The last lines of the *Passio Iuliani*, presumably composed in the late fifth century shortly after completion of the church, mentions the festival but offers no date; *Passio Iuliani* 6.

66 *Historiae* 4.13. On Cautinus, see pp. 54-56, 60-61. For Julian's as little more than a "family cult" through to the late sixth century: Van Dam, *Saints*, 46-47.

67 *VP* 6.6; *Historiae* 3.5; Van Dam, *Saints*, 45.

Gregory was fully convinced by this line of reasoning, which certainly sharpened during nearly three decades of him making pilgrimages to the rural basilica. Perhaps it is only logical that Gregory usually turned to the martyr of Brioude whenever danger reared, for example, when the plague finally did assail the Auvergne in 571 and again in 573 when the onus of suddenly becoming bishop of Tours first weighed heavily.[68]

Another fundamental cultic activity Gregory's paternal family likely introduced to the youth was to trust in saintly *virtutes* contained in relics. Just as Gregory recalled how Gallus repeatedly told the story about Saint Julian healing his foot, so too did our author recollect how his father was accustomed to tell about saints' relics that once protected him.[69] As the story goes, soon after Florentius had married Armentaria, the newlywed husband was among a number of Auvergnat aristocrats ordered by King Theudebert to serve as hostages. Before departing for his prescribed destination – perhaps Theudebert's capital at Reims – the nobleman requested that a cleric give him relics for protection during the ordeal. Gregory shared that Florentius admitted he did not know the identities of the saints whose ashes he put in a golden medallion. Nevertheless, Florentius was convinced that the relics effectively delivered him from a series of entanglements involving bandits, floods and sword-wielding men.[70] One wonders whether little Gregory ever gazed in wonderment upon the patriarch donning the holy object. Presumably Florentius produced the item whenever he spoke about it, just as his brother showed off his scar when he explained how Julian healed him. Perhaps Florentius packaged his tales of the helpful relics in action-packed episodes wherein suspense-filled moments preceded confident requests for invisible saintly aid, these in turn followed by miraculous escapes and reverent offerings of thanks to the holy patrons.[71] One may suspect that Florentius and Gallus already had begun convincing Gregory to trust the saints well before the dream-angel appeared before the boy around the time he was learning his letters. A corollary to Gregory's belief in the efficacy of saints' relics was to acknowledge how one need not be at a tomb to faithfully invoke and to

68 See pp. 60-61, 91.

69 James, "Sense of Wonder," 49: "Gregory's father was clearly devoted to relics."

70 *GM* 83. Perhaps Florentius's decision to wear a golden medallion while traveling to serve his brief stint as a hostage did as much to attract several of these dangers as to protect against them.

71 See *Historiae* 3.15 for an adventure story Gregory did record about Attalus, a maternal relative, who with the help of the family's wily slave Leo escaped slavery after the aristocrat had been compelled to serve as a hostage. For his bravery Leo and his family were liberated.

receive divine succor, since saints' powers remained with certain items they contacted. Attesting to Gregory's early adoption of this rationale was his decision to request solace at the very spring where Julian's killers had washed the martyr's decapitated head. Thus, by the time he was learning to read and even before, Gregory had begun to master the rudiments of faithfully relying on saintly protection.

Beyond tombs and relics, another venue where Gregory's parents taught their receptive progeny he could obtain divine assistance was with the very persons of living, holy disciples of the saints.[72] For example, Florentius extolled the healing abilities of an aged Auvergnat recluse named Martius. One tale Florentius shared with his son related how a childhood friend became so ill with fever and dropsy, people had to pull the youth in a cart to the holy man's cell. The ascetic's touch healed the boy and completely restored his swollen stomach to normal. Another story Florentius "used to declare" (*adserebat*) was how he himself as a child was relieved of a tertian fever through Martius's *virtus*.[73] Gregory's mother similarly testified to the ability of living holy people to heal the infirm. A story she imparted involved her own childhood when she contracted a quartan ague. After physicians provided no comfort, Bishop Gregory of Langres urged the girl to pray. Eventually, however, Armentaria asked to be placed in her grandfather's bed, after which action she recovered.[74] Just as her eventual husband claimed about his own childhood disease, Armentaria attested that she never suffered from that particular illness again.[75] By broadcasting the story about the healing properties of her grandfather's bed after the latter's demise, the mother of three will have made her contribution towards her uncle Tetricus's ongoing exertions, and those of his clerical party, to promote Saint Gregory's cult.

Along with parents teaching the younger Gregory to acknowledge living humans as capable of distributing divine relief, so did Gallus possibly contribute to the youth's reasoning on the matter. As bishop of Clermont and

72 On the commonness of living holy men and saints healing from tombs and relics in the west: Petersen, "Dead or Alive?"

73 *VP* 14.3.

74 *VP* 7.2. Perhaps Gregory of Langres' clerics already had begun to treat the bed as a relic capable of curing the ill.

75 If Armentaria's tale of seeking a cure in her loved one's bed is accurate, the story perhaps suggests that Gregory of Langres may have adopted the role of thaumaturge as a bishop. More certain is a role the elder Gregory played as an exorcist. Having been a longtime count of Autun with a reputation for tirelessly bringing criminals to justice, he became known early during his episcopacy for exhibiting a similar judicial severity by expelling demons from possessed people.

a principal promoter of Saint Julian's cult, Gallus may have been responsible for imparting to Gregory a story about an archpriest from Brioude who could heal ailments. The occurrence dates to Gallus's episcopal tenure and possibly happened during Gregory's childhood.[76] A person recently blinded and resigned to wallowing in his house claimed that one night a man [sc. Julian] appeared in a dream and promised assistance if he went to the basilica and requested the martyr's aid. Not only did the blind man pray before the martyr's tomb, he also insisted that the church's archpriest, Publianus, make the sign of the cross over his eyes. Publianus initially demurred, writes Gregory, because he was a monk and did not want to appear vainglorious. When the blind man persisted in his demand, the archpriest acquiesced and the person recovered his sight. In the *VSJ* Gregory properly credited the martyr Julian with the miracle. But also he added: "but the merit of the disciple who is seen to possess these virtues was not insignificant."[77] If Gallus indeed was the source of this story, perhaps he once had monitored Publianus's progress in avoiding vice and meriting the ability to heal just as Gregory later would do for charismatic ascetics under his episcopal charge.[78] That humans must merit opportunities to comprehend, and even to interact with, the holy actors who usually remained hidden to most was a tenet vital to Gregory's emerging sensibilities about an invisible reality. The relative who was most instrumental in teaching Gregory how one deserved to encounter the divine was Armentaria.

While Gallus and Florentius's exemplary faiths in the *virtutes* of Auvergnat saints provided a foundation for young Gregory's emerging beliefs, they did not eclipse in influence the faith Gregory witnessed in his mother from cradle to the moment he became a cleric and beyond. Armentaria's actions sometimes served to supplement those of Gregory's father and uncle such as when she reiterated her in-laws' lessons about the power of relics. For example, a saint from her native Burgundy whose *virtus* Armentaria extolled by disseminating his relics was Sylvester of Chalon. Locals apparently acknowledged a special conduit of Sylvester's power to be the bishop's rope bed, which was kept in the cathedral. Clerics allowed visitors to the church to cut off small pieces of rope to take home for personal use. Armentaria

76 *VSJ* 22. The opening sentence of *VSJ* 23 refers to the previous anecdote, not to what follows in the chapter: "At that time [i. e., the time of the miracle from *VSJ* 22] my uncle Gallus was bishop of Clermont"; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 179.

77 *VSJ* 22; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 179.

78 Publianus's example reminds of two holy men whom Gregory as bishop would later counsel and steer on the proper course towards attaining salvation. For Senoch and Leobardus, see below, pp. 130-32.

reportedly secured one such relic which she hung around the neck of a girl to heal her from chills.[79]

An important aspect of saintly *virtutes* contained within relics which Gregory learned early on, perhaps especially from Armentaria, is that such invisible power could take the form of a seemingly mundane event. Mention has been made of Florentius's reliquary which reportedly protected the onetime newlywed from natural disasters and brigands around 534. This same reliquary figures in the tale of a rather ordinary miracle that apparently happened at a point between Florentius's demise and his widow relocating to Burgundy. During a harvest season, threshers were piling grain in the fields of the Limagne and burning straw. When these workers momentarily left the straw unattended, the fires spread and threatened the grain. Their shouts of dismay and tears of despair alerted Armentaria who appeared on the scene, removed the reliquary from her neck, and held it aloft before the licking flames. Gregory wrote: "In a moment the entire fire so died down that no sparks were found among the piles of burned straw and the seeds. The grain the fire had touched had suffered no harm."[80] Gregory recorded that he witnessed this incident. As author he intended the emphasis on his mother's confident expectation that the *virtutes* embedded in the reliquary would prove effective to serve as a model of conviction which he wished his readers to adopt. Undoubtedly the son's written interpretation of the event as a miracle echoed his mother's explanation at the time of the action that the invisible saints were to be credited for the visible end to the conflagration. A very similar episode involving relics and a fire happened after Armentaria returned to Burgundy. One night as the widow lay asleep before her fireplace, sparks arose to a rafter setting it alight. When Armentaria awoke, she called for servants who extinguished the blaze with water. Gregory's inclusion this time of the role people actually played in ending the fire makes this event seem especially ordinary. Between his description of the blaze spreading and the mention of servants dousing the fire, Gregory added the following:

> But I believe (*credo*) that because of the power of St Eusebius, whose relics were nearby, the flames were curved and twisted from above, contrary

79 *GM* 84. Gregory wrote that he personally witnessed pilgrims cutting bits of rope from the bed. He may have seen this during a childhood visit to his maternal family line's homeland or perhaps after his widowed mother's move back to Burgundy. On saints' beds as substitutes for their tombs: Van Dam, *Saints*, 128-29.

80 *GM* 83; trans. by Van Dam, *Martyrs*, 108-9.

> to nature. The fire did not spread to the roof, as is common, but flowed down so that you might think that pelts of wool, not flames, were hanging from the beam.[81]

Here Gregory asserted that the fire's movement, contrary to what he thought was natural for fiery motion, should be attributed to proximate relics which his mother kept in her house's oratory. Gregory did not witness this blaze as he had the earlier fire at his family's field. He did qualify his estimation that Saint Eusebius's relics affected the fire's motion with the word, *credo*. Again, his supposition for the reason the fire's movement was curtailed obviously affirmed an interpretation that his mother had applied to the experience following its fortuitous conclusion.

In a third episode one witnesses yet again Gregory's adoption of Armentaria's exemplary willingness to ascribe positive outcomes of rather routine occurrences to saintly protection. In this instance Gregory, now a bishop, was attempting to dry a collection of relics belonging to various saints which had become damp in the humid conditions of an oratory. Towards this end he bound each relic in woolen string and held it over a fire. When drying Saint Illidius's relics, the string proved too long and the items fell into the coals causing the wrapping to redden. The bishop retrieved the package expecting the strings to be burned, but they were unharmed. Gregory concluded: "Seeing this I was astonished, and marveled at the power of this truly blessed bishop. … The string in question was made of wool."[82] In this anecdote Gregory evinced a disposition to readily interpret a seemingly irregular natural occurrence as evidence for saintly power emitting from relics and impacting the natural order of things. Like Armentaria's house fire, the miracle lay in the interpretation of an outcome contrary to what was expected to occur naturally.[83] Gregory's penchant for holding a broad definition of what constituted a miracle apparently derived in large measure from his mother's example. This inclination to construe invisible divine intervention behind many fortuitous and seemingly irregular occurrences would prove helpful for the bishop's subsequent mature theology, wherein

81 *GC* 3; trans. by Van Dam, *Confessors*, 20-21. On chapels and oratories as devotional spaces for laypeople: Bailey, *Religious Worlds*, 67-69.

82 *VP* 3.3; trans. based on James, *Life*, 15.

83 Otherwise, one senses that Gregory's fulsome declaration of Illidius's *virtutes* following the accident evinces a palpable desperation on the author's part to credit the saint with a miracle. Besides him effecting Gregory's lifesaving, career-changing cure as a youth, Illidius proved to be rather miraculously challenged.

he deemed it necessary for Christians to develop an unquestioning faith.[84] By attributing positive outcomes for many rather common occurrences to saintly involvement, people could learn to habitually accept the reality of divine power. An accumulation of instances for which one suspected and admitted saintly causation, no matter the triviality of the events, could further lead individuals towards believing without hesitation.[85] It was this unquestioning habit, born of Gregory's relatives' lessons, which would prove central to the salvific exercises Gregory as bishop and writer in turn would require congregants and readers to adopt.

Divine beings were not always invisible. Armentaria was a principal figure in prompting Gregory to accept dreams and visions as a means of experiencing otherwise invisible powers and motivating him to seek to understand the intentions of otherworldly figures, who were responsible for certain visible phenomena and occurrences.[86] Perhaps Gregory's earliest witness to such an activity happened during the plague threat of 543 when his mother claimed Saint Benignus appeared in a dream and advised her to keep vigils and join in mass on his feast day.[87] One recalls that the saint showed himself only after Armentaria had dreamt that wine in her house's cellars had turned to blood. That nightmare likely stemmed from anxiety derived from the fact that members of the matron's house had not affixed special protective markings to their abode's walls as many neighbors had done. Gregory probably echoed his mother's previous opinion when he mentioned the practice somewhat disparagingly in the *Historiae*, noting that peasants had referred to the signs as "Taus." While not entirely dismissive of the activity, Gregory nevertheless wanted readers to know that it was Armentaria's faithful acquiescence to Benignus's directive that saved her household, not recourse to a vulgar expedient.

The tale of Gregory's own first recorded vision likely indicates the child's early acknowledgement and attempted emulation of his mother's expertise with dreams and visions. Upon awakening from a dream wherein an angel advised the boy to write letters on a woodchip and use this to heal his father, Gregory's first recourse was to turn to Armentaria. The mother instructed her son to do as the apparition had indicated, which he dutifully

84 See below, pp. 134-39.

85 On the centrality of Gregory using the literary device of repetition to convince readers to anticipate outcomes, good ends for good people and bad for the wicked: Breukelaar, *Historiography*, 269-71. See also Jones, "Gregory of Tours' Poetics," 16-17.

86 On dreams and visions in Gregory's writings: de Nie, *Views*, 213-93; Moreira, *Dreams, Visions*, 77-171.

87 De Nie, *Views*, 261-62; Moreira, *Dreams, Visions*, 83.

did, thereby achieving a positive end. The next year the same dream-angel reappeared to offer more biblically-inspired advice for healing his father's gout. That Gregory did not report consulting his mother following this second experience suggests that by then the youth (around nine years of age) may already have progressed considerably in attuning himself towards welcoming and obeying oneiric messages from holy beings.[88]

Armentaria was not alone among Gregory's relations in prompting the young boy's receptiveness to the reality of a dream-world through which one could interact with beings from beyond.[89] As addressed above, the youth's uncle Gallus stated that during the 543 plague an angel informed him that the Auvergne would be spared in answer to the bishop's own persistent prayers. Gregory probably had this story recurrently drummed into his head during multiple Lenten seasons spent reciting Rogation prayers at Brioude. Additionally, he may have listened to the tale about Gallus and the angel for as many as four consecutive years prior to experiencing his own first dream-visitation from an angel. Maybe Gallus's example, which proved so impactful for the community's ritual calendar, perhaps coupled with angel-stories derived from listening to Scripture readings, convinced young Gregory that he was as likely to receive an oneiric visitation from an angel as from a saint. Later, as a seasoned cleric, Gregory undoubtedly took from Gallus's example the lesson that a vision could legitimize or bolster an ecclesiastic's interpretation of events. For if Gallus suspected that his prayers had stayed the plague's advance, it was the angel, the bishop asserted, who had declared as much. Gallus's promulgation of the angelic visitation provided divine sanction for him to implement his own desired program, to cause the Auvergnat populace to annually purge their sins through penitential prayers and by making the pilgrimage to Brioude.[90]

Bishop Gallus (and/or Florentius) may have been the source for another significant oneiric incident involving Brioude. The tale involves Saint Julian's first ever known visible appearance, which happened before a paralytic named Foedamia.[91] This woman had spent many years begging alms from the faithful

88 Ibid., 83-84. Moreira, ibid., 84, points out that Gregory may have associated the biblical tales with his childhood visions years after the fact. She reminds that the author's intent when penning the story in *GC* was to stress "that dreams spoke the language of scripture … and that Scripture was the *medicamentum* that must be applied to the suffering psyche."

89 On Gregory's "dream-reality" as a kind of "spiritual reality": de Nie, *Views*, 297-98.

90 For Gregory's use of visions to augment bishops' spiritual authority: Moreira, *Dreams, Visions*, 88-95.

91 *VP* 9. While it is possible that Gregory simply gathered the tale from the shrine's miracle register, the story seems detailed beyond what would have been recorded there.

after being put on display at Julian's basilica by relatives. One night as others celebrated vigils, a man [sc. Julian] appeared to the sleeping Foedamia in a dream offering to help her approach the tomb. Awakening and realizing she was completely healed, the woman then actually entered the church. After her cure Foedamia was able to provide an invaluable service to the promoters of Julian's cult by repeatedly describing the saint's physical appearance.[92] For years she alone was able to testify to congregants and pilgrims about the martyr's approachable countenance.[93] If Foedamia's healing occurred in the early sixth century, as seems likely, Gallus and Florentius may have been among the principal grateful beneficiaries of her visionary contribution to the martyr's cult.[94]

Because it apparently was commonly accepted that dreams and visions could legitimize or establish authority in late ancient societies, there persisted a vigorous and lasting debate over just whose claims might be taken seriously.[95] Gregory's willingness to support the beggar Foedamia's vision despite her low social status attests that he was open to considering a broad range of people's claims to be potentially authentic. Gregory did, however, develop a conviction that individuals must prove themselves worthy of seeing certain holy phenomena to which most people were not privy.[96] Here again Armentaria played a formative role in her son adopting this rationale regarding visionary ability. An early incident whereby Gregory evidenced such a concern apparently happened after his father's death and before his mother's move to Burgundy.[97] Gregory and Armentaria were celebrating the feast day for Polycarp, a saint particularly revered in Burgundy, by attending a mass on the martyr's behalf at Riom, a village near Clermont. After the readings, a deacon brought forth a tower-shaped container of the Lord's host to place on the altar. As he advanced a few people noticed that the container was floating on air; the deacon was unable to grab hold of the vessel. Gregory interpreted this unnatural phenomenon as a sacred rejection of the deacon's contamination, for he was reputed to have been a habitual adulterer. Only four people deserved to espy the mystery. Gregory wrote: "Only one priest

92 *VSJ* 9. Julian was tall, nicely dressed, smiling, blond haired with gray streaks, pleasant of speech with extremely white skin.

93 A monk who later claimed to see a vision of Julian talking to Saint Tetradius confirmed that the martyr's appearance matched Foedamia's description. The monk's vision happened in the aftermath of King Theuderic's assault on the Auvergne, hence after 524; *VSJ* 14.

94 This anecdote on Foedamia dates between *VSJ* 7 and 8, which describe a Burgundian assault in the area dateable to around 500, and *VSJ* 13 and 14, which pertain to Theuderic's Auvergnian campaign around 524.

95 Moreira, *Dreams, Visions*, 88-107.

96 James, "Sense of Wonder," 51-52.

97 Gregory referred to himself here as *in adolescentia mea*; *GM* 85.

and three women, among them my mother, were permitted to see this; the others did not see it. I confess, I was present at the festival, but I was not worthy to see this."[98] This anecdote indicates how Gregory acknowledged a point during his later youth when his mother exhibited a marked level of spiritual maturity which he did not yet possess. Maybe when Armentaria initially divulged what she had witnessed to her son she also instructed him how to become more sensitive to visible signs that might betray the operation of holy powers, which logically were predisposed to reject sin. Perhaps the matron also was responsible for convincing her son that a salient part of accumulating spiritual worth entailed striving to develop a firmer faith.

More evidence for Armentaria's imprint on Gregory's belief in spiritual worth pertains to the mother's saintly grandfather, Gregory of Langres. When the elder Gregory was alive, although his cathedra was at Langres, he usually resided 168 kilometers away at the *castrum* of Dijon. This situation afforded the pious prelate a rare privilege to avoid vainglory by conducting nighttime prayers and singing psalms alone in a baptistery, conveniently adjacent to his own domicile, which housed the relics of many saints. After Gregory's demise, a deacon eventually reported that when the prelate used to knock on the baptistery's door to enter at night, it opened seemingly on its own with no one present, and after an extended silence, one suddenly could hear many voices singing for several hours. Our younger Gregory interpreted this report as follows: "I believe that, since the relics of great saints were there, these saints had revealed themselves to this holy man and sang with him the praises of the Lord."[99] The deacon's claims that his former superior used to commune with the saints certainly constituted an element of the Tetricus regime's concerted efforts to promote Gregory of Langres' sanctity. Perhaps the deacon himself, or Bishop Tetricus, related the tale to the younger Gregory during one of his visits to Langres in his childhood or early adult years. Otherwise, Armentaria may have been his source for the story. In the process of affirming her grandfather's holiness, Armentaria may have instilled in young Gregory an early ideal impression for the kind of holy proceedings a fully spiritually mature person might prove worthy of witnessing, proceedings which otherwise remained invisible to the eyes of the undeserving.[100]

98 *GM* 85; trans. by Van Dam, *Martyrs*, 110. Cf. Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogi* 2.2.1-2, where five people among a multitude, a virgin, a priest, and three monks, deserved to witness a ball of fire which hovered above Bishop Martin's head as he conducted mass.

99 *VP* 7.2; trans. by James, *Life*, 44.

100 Erin Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 19, writes: "Gregory's own understanding of miracles probably owed more to his mother's instruction than to patristic tradition…"

Gregory had an opportunity to gauge his present spiritual worth when he ventured to yet another destination near Clermont, an estate called Marsat, for a celebration of Saint Mary's festival. While Gregory may have already become a young cleric when the following occurred, this is not necessarily so.[101] As he approached the estate's rural oratory at night, Gregory saw bright lights gleaming from the windows and assumed some of the faithful must be keeping vigils. But upon arrival at the site he found the doors locked tight and all silent. After sending for a custodian to bring a key, the door suddenly opened so he could enter. He wrote: "But in the glow of my candle the bright light that I had admired from the outside disappeared – I think because of the blackness of my sins. Inside I could find nothing from which that bright light had originated except the power of the glorious Virgin."[102] The Virgin's power was, of course, invisible, but it manifested in the form of a divine light symbolic of its holiness. Gregory interpreted his inability to perceive the light when he entered the oratory as evidence for his lack of full spiritual worth, a product of his sinfulness. The incident may have felt momentarily deflating for one who by then perhaps was hoping he would one day prove worthy to join in song with the saints while still living as some of his ancestors had.

Another "learning moment," this one happening years after the near-miss at the oratory of Marsat, is indicative of Gregory having developed a modicum of spiritual maturity. It occurred while he was riding with an entourage from Burgundy to Clermont, presumably after a visit to a relative, perhaps his widowed mother. Maybe it was because Armentaria deemed her son sufficiently advanced in his faith that, as the story recounts, she placed into his care his father's reliquary. While *en route* towards his home, a violent thunderstorm chanced to appear and threatened the riders. Gregory's initial reaction evinced that he had learned Armentaria's technique, sort of: he confidently held the reliquary aloft as he had seen his mother do when their field caught fire, after which the cloud divided in two and the threat dissipated. But then vainglory overcame him, "as one would expect a juvenile fervor to produce."[103] Instead of crediting the saints, Gregory boasted to his fellows that he had deserved God's gift. No sooner had he made this remark, the horse slipped and he was tossed to the earth. Writing decades afterwards

101 The estimation that this incident happened early in Gregory's clerical career is based off his obvious spiritual immaturity exhibited in the anecdote. While the event possibly happened before his mother left for Burgundy, it is equally likely to have occurred afterwards.

102 *GM* 8; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 29.

103 *GM* 83: *ut iuvenilis fervor agere solet*.

Gregory recalled how this painful spill sufficed to teach him about vainglory, so the urge did not overcome him thereafter. He wrote: "For if it happened that I was worthy to observe some manifestations of the powers of saints, I have proclaimed that they were due to the gift of God through the faith of the saints."[104] This sentence is very telling. Although the anecdote is generally self-effacing, the passage affirms how Gregory eventually did imagine how he proved worthy to witness manifestations of saintly *virtutes*, on multiple occasions no less. Furthermore, Gregory would learn to regard vainglory as a dangerous sin capable of derailing a dedicated cleric or ascetic from one of the paths of righteousness. Therefore, for him to record how he imagined his soul was no longer in jeopardy from that vice says much about the level of spiritual authority he eventually deemed himself to bear. As Gregory knew well, the origin for this ultimate realization of a high level of spiritual maturity lay in him taking to heart from earliest days the many lessons his parents and other relations had imparted to him. As Giselle de Nie has shown in her many studies on the bishop's imagination, Gregory became an ardent investigator of a wide array of physical phenomena, keen to discern invisible, divine motives and causation behind certain visible events.[105] By his teenage years Gregory had begun incorporating thoughts on the impact of sinfulness into his rationalizations regarding the processes of suspecting, realizing, and even meriting to witness the invisible actors at work behind so many visible phenomena. One day Gregory would include in such deductions speculations about deceased peoples' eternal fates.[106]

Conclusion

Gregory of Tours' fixation on saints and their miracles originated and developed during his first dozen years of life, owing to the actions and examples of his father and mother, whose nurturing efforts were accompanied by those of other relatives, notably Gallus early on. At the most basic level of lessons learned, the child absorbed a conviction that it was good to trust the saints whenever confronted with adversity. Years later as bishop and author, he would make an unquestioning trust in saintly *virtutes* the foundation for his pastoral and literary agendas. Gregory's belief in the protective power of saints was organic and sincere. He began invoking the aid of God's invisible

104 *GM* 83; trans. by Van Dam, *Martyrs*, 109.
105 E. g., de Nie, *Views*; eadem, *Word, Image and Experience*; eadem, "*Divinos Concipe Sensus.*"
106 Chapters 4 to 6.

friends likely as early as age five, and certainly by around eight, when, with Armentaria's guidance, he relied upon divine support to cure his father's gout. Gregory's recollection of the visionary episodes whereby he helped cure Florentius suggests that his parents' tutelage effectively wrought a marked level of spiritual maturity in their prepubescent son.[107] By age twelve years this maturity will have enabled the child to start giving thought to his Christian culture's perception of humanity's generally sinful condition.[108] Multiple pilgrimages to Brioude, all of which occasioned moments to consider individual and communal penance, provided opportunities for relations to begin priming the child to associate illness and calamity with human sinfulness, and healing and other beneficial happenstances with salvation.

Among possible impediments to acquiring this spiritual wisdom were the usual secular pursuits and this-worldly preoccupations, such as appreciating the Gallic scenery. As a young layperson being raised by lay parents, most of whose extended relatives were laity, Gregory undoubtedly simply absorbed a disposition to adore the splendors of the then-tranquil homelands of his paternal and maternal kin while also appreciating certain pleasures derived from his family's sizeable landed fortunes; hence the occasional nostalgic reference in his books to the beauteous and bounteous fields of the Limagne, or to the majesty of Dijon's fortified walls that loomed over that town's surrounding idyllic district.[109] Aside from sharing in frivolities, Gregory's parents likely also began preparing their sons to manage the estates. Florentius's demise, therefore, probably caused quite a shock for the patriarch's youngest child. If Gregory was as devoted to Florentius as I suspect, who knows the extent to which the patriarch's death may have cast a pall on the youth. Perhaps the boy was still struggling to cope with that traumatic event when within a year or two he himself nearly succumbed to a deadly fever. It cannot be known whether or not Florentius's passing contributed in any way to

107 Cf. Heinzelmann, "Gregory of Tours: Elements," 22. It is almost certain that Armentaria and Florentius fostered a similar zeal for the saints within their other two children. Perhaps an element of Gregory's obvious ardor stemmed from him as a third child trying to keep up with the momentarily superior spiritual growth of his older siblings.

108 For an optimistic assessment of what late ancient laypeople writ large believed and knew about their Christian faith, including some of the religion's difficult doctrines: Bailey, *Religious Worlds*, 139-57.

109 Limagne: *GM* 83; *Historiae* 3.9, 5.33. Dijon: *Historiae* 3.19. Presumably there was a lot of fishing going on, too. One hopes Gregory and his siblings spent hours fishing with their father during the ten to fifteen years the latter spent with them. Gregory was impressed with the quantity of fish in the River Ouche and the size of those in Lake Leman; *Historiae* 3.19, *GM* 75. His joy for catching and eating fish endured into his years as bishop: *VSM* 2.16, 3.1. Other fish tales: *GC* 5; *Historiae* 5.36, 8.10, 8.25; *VP* 11.2, 17.4. See Weidemann, *Kulturgeschichte*, 2: 368.

producing some mindset that resulted in Gregory, when faced with death himself, making his fateful vow. It is probable, however, that the early loss of his father accentuated even further the adolescent's already substantial psychological reliance upon the saints. According to Raymond Van Dam, Gregory's self-identification as an *alumnus* of Saints Andrew, Julian, and Ferreolus seemingly went beyond him perceiving himself as a mere protégé, but rather as the saints' "foster son."[110]

Other uncertainties that impinged on Gregory's childhood sense of blissful continuity included the impending disruption in living arrangements of the other members of his nuclear family. Armentaria apparently lingered in the Auvergne for at least a couple of years beyond her husband's expiration, presumably taking on management of the family's properties herself while organizing for the move back to Burgundy.[111] Peter may have left the Auvergne to join his great-uncle Tetricus's clergy even before his mother's departure. As for the anxious Gregory, the course of his immediate future was determined by Death's sudden, and momentarily seemingly inevitable, attack on of his tender life, followed by the terrified pre-teen's quick bargain with Saint Illidius, and by the latter's compassionate acquiescence to the youth's prayer. Upon fulfillment of his vow to enter the church, the second element in Gregory's "making," training in ecclesiastical writings, would ensue alongside a continuance of familial instruction. By virtue of his clerical education, Gregory would attach theological and pastoral poignancy to his homemade, youthful confidence in saintly *virtutes.*

110 *Alumnus* of Julian: *VSJ* 2; Fortunatus, *Carmen* 5.3.11-12; Ferreolus: *VSJ* 2; Andrew: *MA* 38. For the "quasi-familial" quality of the term *alumnus*: Van Dam, *Saints*, 54. Likewise, three of Gregory's male relations, namely his uncle Gallus and great-uncles Tetricus and Nicetius, all of whom, significantly, he eventually touted as heaven-dwelling saints, also filled roles as surrogate fathers at some point in the years following Florentius's demise; ibid., 53.

111 After Florentius's death Armentaria presumably took on the usual male-oriented practice of managing family estates. In his writings Gregory circumvented this worldly aspect of his widowed mother's activities; Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 25.

2. Maturing Spiritually in a Perilous World

During the first dozen years of Gregory's life, relatives groomed the boy not only how to faithfully expect the aid of saints but also how to discern, and even interact with, invisible, divine forces behind visible phenomena. A second influence that would mold Gregory as he entered his early adult years was sacred literature, of which the Scriptures played a significant part.[1] The lad's earliest contacts with Scriptures undoubtedly had already commenced with his pious parents sharing biblical stories and at churches where figures such as Bishop Gallus and Nicetius, the latter still only a priest, had provided more lessons through sermons and liturgical readings.[2] Gregory learned to read Scripture early on, but presumably it was only after he fulfilled his fateful vow to Saint Illidius that he mounted a reading regimen which would approach a level of influence comparable to what his parents had taught him. Concurrent with the young cleric ingesting the teachings of the Fathers, familial instructions in spiritual growth and cultic practices persisted. Some of these newer lessons, mainly being imparted now by relatives of his maternal line, would enable Gregory to rise to the challenge of prospering in the sometimes dangerous ecclesiastical culture into which he became immersed. As the Auvergnat cleric endured, one decade after another, Death proved itself an even fiercer foe than it had appeared during Gregory's childhood.

Death and the Aspiring Cleric

In 551, probably not three years after Florentius's demise, Death claimed the life of the person whom the child-cleric likely internalized as his first foster-father, Gallus of Clermont. By this year Armentaria possibly had already

1 Bonnet, *Le Latin de Grégoire*, 53-76; Antin, "Emplois de la Bible"; idem, "Notes sur le style."

2 At late ancient churches, painted murals of scenes taken from the Bible and saints' lives helped clerics effectively communicate Christian doctrine to young persons along with society's illiterate majorities: e. g., Sauvel, "Les miracles de Saint Martin"; Brennan, "Text and Image"; Kessler, "Pictorial Narrative." Perhaps images on church walls also helped establish the parameters for the visible appearance of those invisible actors whom spiritually maturing individuals such as Gregory sought to detect.

located back to her native Burgundy; she apparently settled near Chalon.[3] Gregory's elder brother Peter likewise may already have moved to Langres, where as a cleric in Bishop Tetricus's entourage he perhaps started aspiring to succeed his mother's aging uncle to that city's bishopric. In the Auvergne Gregory possibly shared time between Clermont and one of his family's rural estates.[4] While in the city, he, now barely a teen, will have witnessed the contest for his deceased uncle's vacant cathedra. This heated affair was waged between two candidates whom Gregory as author later characterized as bad and worse, a vainglorious priest and a greedy archdeacon. After enjoying a canonical election Cato, the priest, reportedly started treating the diocese as if it were his own prior to consecration, and he even threatened the life of his opponent, the archdeacon Cautinus. The latter outmaneuvered his foe, however, by traveling to the court of young King Theudebald, who summoned a gathering of bishops which conferred the episcopacy on the candidate. Cato thereafter refused to acknowledge Cautinus as bishop, and so the city's clergy split into factions.[5] With Cautinus now holding the upper hand, his party denied shares of the church's proceeds to opponents until they sided with him.[6] Gregory's greater disparagement of Cautinus

3 Armentaria to Burgundy: *GM* 83; *GC* 3; *VSM* 1.36, 3.60. The latter two are suggestive of her residing near Chalon; Pietri, *La ville de Tours*, 253 n. 40; Van Dam, *Saints*, 283, n. 93. Perhaps Armentaria lived at Nicetius's former estate; Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 31.

4 Scholars are divided on where Gregory went after Gallus's death. For him staying in the Auvergne: Breukelaar, *Historiography*, 30-41; Heinzelmann, "Gregory of Tours: Elements," 21-23. For Gregory residing with Nicetius, who ascended the cathedra at Lyons in 552: Van Dam, *Saints*, 53-54. For Gregory at Lyons and then possibly serving as a priest at Brioude: Wiedemann, *Kulturgeschichte*, 1: 206-07. Evidence for favoring the Auvergne includes the author's references to properties in that region as "our fields": *VSM* 1.34; *GM* 47, 50, 83. It is unlikely that Gregory had an official attachment to Saint Julian's church at Brioude; Heinzelmann, "Gregory of Tours: Elements," 23.

5 Rouche, *L'Aquitaine des Wisigoths*, 334.

6 Cautinus reportedly informed Gregory that when he was a deacon he witnessed a vision of many holy people singing psalms and standing around Saint Stremonius's previously ignored tomb, located in the village of Issoire, after which he ordered that the saint be venerated; *GC* 43. Cautinus may have touted the tale of the discovery of Stremonius's tomb as part of an effort to build episcopal authority among the city's divided clergy; Van Dam, *Confessors*, 43 n. 34. This anecdote attests that just because Gregory felt disdain for a particular bishop, it did not prevent him from crediting that prelate with exhibiting reverence for a certain saint, or citing him as a source for a miracle story. By narrating this story, Gregory seemingly admitted that Cautinus possessed some level of spiritual maturity, at least during a moment prior to him becoming a bishop. Another bishop whom Gregory despised was Bertram of Bordeaux. Nevertheless, the writer recounted a story Bertram told him about a handkerchief infused with the *virtus* of the proto-martyr Stephen, and he noted how the prelate piously installed pieces of the relic in churches he consecrated; *GM* 33.

versus Cato in his writings leads one to suspect that the adolescent cleric belonged to the losing faction. Therefore, owing to Death's handiwork in 551, the youth for the first time in his life may have felt like something of a stranger in his own *patria*. This scenario may have contributed all the more to a willingness on Gregory's part to travel frequently to visit his mother and maternal relations in Burgundy. But despite a dislike for his own bishop, Gregory was not denied ecclesiastical advancement during Cautinus's episcopal tenure, for he achieved the rank of deacon around his twenty-fifth year, which was the canonically appropriate age.[7]

A year after Death carried off Gregory's paternal uncle, it ventured to Paris where it claimed the life of Bishop Sacerdos of Lyons.[8] Before Death completed his lethal business, however, Sacerdos from his deathbed successfully petitioned King Childebert I to allow his nephew Nicetius to succeed him as bishop. And so in 552 Armentaria's mother's brother, Nicetius, took up the bishopric.[9] Next, in 555 Death struck down Bishop Guntharius of Tours, who held that post less than three years during which time he drank overly much and endured mental affliction.[10] The clergy at Tours selected none other than the Auvergnat priest Cato to be their bishop, and they even acquired King Chlothar I's support for the decision. Cato, however, remained desirous of Clermont's cathedra and rejected the offer.[11] After Chlothar returned from a military campaign, the clerics of Tours asked that the king accept as their bishop Eufronius, yet another relation (probably a cousin) of Armentaria.[12] Despite a newly regretful Cato making a last minute challenge, Eufronius kept the see.[13] Thus, as a consequence of Death's recent dealings, three of Armentaria's close relations now held important Gallic bishoprics by 556. The matron probably envisioned these three episcopal seats as potential destinations for one or both of her clerical sons.

As for Gregory, what perhaps was already an uncomfortable situation at Cautinus's Clermont became worse. Death took King Theudebald by means of

7 Heinzelmann, "Gregory of Tours: Elements," 23, posits that Gregory's silence about who elevated him to the deaconate should cause one to suspect it was Cautinus who presided over his promotion.

8 *Historiae* 4.36.

9 *VP* 8.3. Like Cautinus in Clermont, Nicetius presided over his bishopric for approximately two decades.

10 *Historiae* 10.31.

11 *Historiae* 4.11. For the possibility Cato was a distant relative of Gregory: Weidemann, *Kulturgeschichte*, 1: 203-05; Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 25.

12 Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 16-17, posits Eufronius possibly was Armentaria's brother but was more likely a cousin.

13 *Historiae* 4.15.

a debilitating stroke in 555, and King Chlothar seized his kingdom. The king then stationed his eldest son Chramn at Clermont.[14] This disreputable prince gathered a gang of ruffians who terrorized the region's socially prominent elements. Among their blasphemous actions, Chramn's toughs dragged the city's exiled count and his wife out from sanctuary at the cathedral. In addition, they once chased down Bishop Cautinus while the latter was leading the city's faithful on the Lenten pilgrimage to Brioude. The cad responded by abandoning his congregants and fleeing away on horse.[15] Meanwhile, Chlothar marched east to consolidate control over newly acquired lands. The king engaged his Franks versus the Saxons in a battle during which Death accumulated many casualties from both armies.[16] During Chlothar's absence, Chramn left Clermont to conspire against his own father with his sonless uncle, Childebert I.[17] The stage was set for Death to rage mightily in Gaul and to threaten Gregory and his kin in the process.

In 555 or 556 King Childebert encouraged the Saxons to encroach on his brother's lands, thus causing Chlothar to venture eastwards again. Chramn then reentered the Auvergne and began forcing the region's elites to switch allegiance from his father to himself. Clermont's populace huddled behind the city's walls, which signaled for Death to send various diseases, by which many lost their lives.[18] Gregory did not divulge whether he numbered among those in the countryside who expediently sided with Chramn, nor whether he was among those who nestled inside disease-ridden Clermont. Perhaps he sought the protection of Saint Julian at Brioude as he did during other instances of duress. Meanwhile, Chramn left the Auvergne when King Chlothar ordered his sons Charibert and Guntram into the territory. Chramn duped his half-brothers into thinking their father was dead, which prompted the pair to dart for Burgundy with the rebel prince close behind. In Burgundy the prince besieged Chalon and then marched to Dijon where Bishop Tetricus of Langres, secure behind that town's walls, refused him entry.[19] Subsequently Chramn marched to Paris to strengthen his alliance with Childebert, after which the latter led an army on a campaign of pillage all the way to Reims.[20] Gregory provided no details for Chlothar's return

14 *Historiae* 4.9.

15 *Historiae* 4.13.

16 *Historiae* 4.14.

17 *Historiae* 4.16.

18 *Historiae* 4.16.

19 *Historiae* 4.16. Based on a reading of the *sortes biblicae* Tetricus's priests determined not to allow the rebellious prince into the fortified town. See below, p. 68.

20 *Historiae* 4.17.

from the east, but it seems that that mighty king's renewed presence in the heart of Gaul resulted in an uneasy balance of power against his treacherous son and brother.[21] Death summarily ended this stalemate in 558 by sticking Childebert I with a long, bedridden illness and then ending his life. The king's demise brought about a rare situation, a momentarily unified Frankish monarchy. Chlothar consolidated his dead brother's kingdom and so an outmatched Chramn tried to reconcile with his father, but to no avail. The prince then went into hiding in Brittany, which region the ferocious king invaded in 560. After father defeated son in battle and the victor's soldiers captured the prince, Chlothar demanded Chramn's execution. A hut was burned down over the corpses of him and his family.[22] Death closed out this Merovingian operetta the following year by affecting King Chlothar's demise.[23]

In 561 four sons of Chlothar – Guntram, Sigibert, Charibert and the youngest, a half-brother to the others, Chilperic – divided their father's lands among themselves.[24] This settlement did not long impede Death's exertions in Gaul. The Avars responded to the news of Chlohtar's expiration by invading the region. The new ruler of the easternmost Frankish kingdom, Sigibert, proved up to the test; he marched his armies east and duly defeated the foe. Chilperic, meanwhile, took advantage of Sigibert's absence by seizing several of his cities and marching upon his capital, Reims. The Austrasian king retaliated by taking Chilperic's capital, Soissons, and then he beat his brother in battle, thereby reacquiring all his cities.[25] As for Gregory's family, from 561 Armentaria, Tetricus, Peter, and Nicetius all became subjects of King Guntram's Burgundy. Eufronius's Tours lay in Charibert's kingdom, while Gregory and his fellow Auvergnians accustomed themselves to the governance of their new lord, Sigibert.

21 Gregory focused on one casualty of this era, Chlothar's duke, Austrapius. The duke had eluded Chramn's ire by seeking sanctuary at Saint Martin's basilica at Tours. Upon Chlothar's return, Austrapius entered the clergy. The king made him bishop of a town outside Poitiers and promised him the latter see whenever the cathedra's current occupant died. When this finally happened Chlothar was already dead, and King Childebert prevented Austrapius from acquiring Poitiers. The latter then returned to his diocese where a band of Taifali Goths rebelled against the former duke and killed him; *Historiae* 4.18.

22 *Historiae* 4.20.

23 *Historiae* 4.21.

24 *Historiae* 4.22. Prior to this distribution, King Chilperic entered Paris and tried to take his father's treasury with which he might secure the city. His three older half-brothers joined forces and handily expelled him. On the 561 division of the *regnum*: Ewig, *Spätantikes und fränkisches*, 1: 135-38.

25 *Historiae* 4.23.

With the latest round of Merovingian civil warfare concluded, in 563 Death alighted upon Clermont and singled out the cleric Gregory, who became diseased and feverish. This illness and its remission later proved the first of Gregory's storied physical disorders to be put to paper; the tale occupies two lengthy chapters in *VSM* 1.[26] In this account Gregory opted to embellish the details of his plight by portraying Death as a sentient being, aspiring to end his life:

> I became ill with infected sores and a fever. Because I was unable to drink and eat, I was so worried that I lost all hope for my present life and I thought only about the soil required for burial. Death *threatened* me persistently and eagerly *and wished* to force my soul from my body. I was already close to dying.[27]

Perhaps this sickness did not appear as life-threatening initially as had Gregory's nearly fatal childhood illness, for instead of having servants carry him to the nearest holy tomb, the cleric determined to travel to Tours. As he had done during his earlier brush with Death, Gregory offered a vow to a saint; this time he promised to journey to Saint Martin's basilica.[28] The happenstance of Gregory's mother's kin Eufronius now occupying the episcopal seat at Tours may have provided extra incentive for the cleric to undertake this pilgrimage of some two-hundred and sixty kilometers. An early invocation of Martin's name provided the sick young man a modicum of health so that he was able to travel. But days into the journey the fever intensified and again it was feared he would die.[29] At this dire moment Gregory's companions advised him to turn back, suggesting he could complete the vow later. But Gregory insisted they press on, and so the

26 Gregory's composition of this story about Martin healing him in 563, and his inclusion of the tale in his first book about the saint's miracles, served a purpose of highlighting that he, a newcomer to the town after his election as bishop in 573, shared with his congregants a reliance on Saint Martin. On that effort, see below, pp. 91-95.

27 *VSM* 1.32; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 233, with my italics.

28 On this pilgrimage: Van Dam, *Saints*, 125-27.

29 Gregory described his fever worsening while he was in a wood (*silvas*). This need not have been an actual forest. The author's further reference to the "wilderness" (*heremo*) suggests the wood symbolizes the Israelites' wilderness, meaning Martin's tomb is the Promised Land; Van Dam, *Saints*, 127. For Gregory's use of props in scenic narrative: Pizarro, "Gregory of Tours," 344-45. The forest image also may represent not only a low point in Gregory's physical duress, but a peak in his spiritual anxiety, too. If the latter is so, the passage reads strikingly similarly to that depicting the allegorical dark wood for the opening of Dante's *Commedia*.

party laboriously ventured all the way to Martin's church.[30] Upon arrival at Tours Gregory's concern for his own health was eclipsed by worry for a traveling companion, a cleric named Armentarius (a maternal relation?), who contracted infected sores and lost his senses to the point he became incoherent. After three nights of the party keeping vigils at Martin's tomb, Gregory awoke on the following day fully relieved of his physical impairment. He also discovered that Armentarius regained nearly all of his faculties.[31] Yet again a saint had wrested Gregory from Death's "persistent" and "eager" schemes. Presumably it was not long after this latest recovery that Gregory became a deacon.[32]

Around 566 civil war resumed in Gaul when King Sigibert attempted to wrest Arles from his brother Guntram.[33] For this campaign Sigibert gathered fighting-age men from the Auvergne to join in the attack. A force led by Count Firminus of Clermont accompanied the ruler's main army and together they took the city. When Guntram sent an army to counterattack, the Austrasian king's forces became the besieged. Bishop Sabaudus of Arles then tricked Sigibert's troops into sallying out of the city against their foe, promising that if the battle turned against them he would open the gates and allow them to reenter. Sigibert's armies lost the confrontation, and his soldiers retreated back to the city only to find themselves assailed from behind by Guntram's men and from ahead by townspeople throwing rocks on them from the walls. The soldiery, including those from the Auvergne, sought to escape by crossing the Rhone, and many drowned in the river's strong current. A few Auvergnians managed to survive crossing over the river, and Count Firminus gained surety for his own life and ignominiously returned home. Otherwise, Death reveled in the carnage of the fiasco. Late in 567 Death next unexpectedly struck down one of the four ruling Merovingians, King Charibert.[34] Because the latter had no heir, his brothers parceled out the deceased's territories in 568. The principal beneficiary of Charibert's expiration was King Sigibert, who acquired a massive contiguous block of land in Aquitaine.[35] Eufronius's Tours, along with Poitiers, was among the cities that passed to Sigibert's possession. For an interesting feature of the treaty the three kings swore to, none could enter Charibert's former capital,

30 *VSM* 1.32.

31 *VSM* 1.33. Gregory and companions returned home from Tours with relics, through which they continued to experience Martin's protective *virtutes*: *VSM* 1.34-36.

32 Perhaps it was not Cautinus but Eufronius who presided over Gregory's ordination as deacon.

33 *Historiae* 4.30.

34 *Historiae* 4.26.

35 Esders, "'Avenger of all Perjury,'" 24-25.

Paris, without the others' consent.[36] We will have reason to return to this treaty in chapter 5, but for now, it can be noted that the stipulation was designed to thwart Chilperic's ambitions.[37] Perhaps it is unsurprising then that in 568 Chilperic sent his sons with armies to seize Tours and Poitiers. Guntram lent Sigibert the support of the patrician Mummolus, who expelled the enemy forces and restored the two cities to the Austrasian realm.[38]

In 571 Death dealt an even harsher blow upon the Auvergnat populace at large than what the menace had wrought on the region's fighting men at the failed siege of Arles several years before. A devastating plague alighted on Clermont and its vicinity.[39] Gregory declared that throughout the entire region the dead were too numerous to count.[40] He offered the greatest detail for the pestilence in the *Historiae*: "Death came very quickly. An open sore like a snake's bite appeared in the groin or the armpit, and the man who had it soon died of its poison, breathing his last on the second or third day."[41] One individual who surprisingly stood out to Gregory by virtue of his honorable conduct amid the slaughter was the formerly prideful priest, Cato. Gregory recalled that while many eluded the disease, Cato tirelessly buried the dead and courageously conducted masses. In return for Cato's heroic and pious exertions, Death took the priest's life. Gregory contrasted Cato's example with that of the priest's nemesis, Bishop Cautinus, who scurried from one place to the next to elude the contagion.[42] Eventually, the bishop returned to Clermont, apparently mistakenly thinking the disease had abated, and there he expired on Good Friday. Otherwise, Gregory did not disclose in the *Historiae* his own whereabouts while Cato the priest was tending to the dying and the dead; however, in the *VSJ* he unapologetically explained how he responded to the epidemic's arrival by seeking the accustomed security of his paternal family's patron, Saint Julian. He wrote: "I went to the village of Brioude so that I who could not be protected by my own merits might be shielded by the protection of the blessed martyr Julian."[43] As a consequence, Death did not target the deacon while his party rode out

36 *Historiae* 7.6.

37 Esders, "'Avenger of all Perjury,'" 25, suggests Chilperic was probably forced to accept the treaty.

38 *Historiae* 4.45.

39 *VSJ* 46a.

40 One attempt to give a number to the dead in a subsection of the city accounted for three hundred corpses amassed in one church on a Sunday. With so many lost, coffins and tombstones were not to be had and people buried the dead in mass graves; *Historiae* 4.31.

41 *Historiae* 4.31; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 226.

42 *Historiae* 4.31.

43 *VSJ* 46a; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 191.

the plague; unfortunately, however, the menace did claim the life of one servant, who had been entrusted to the care of a local soothsayer rather than the martyr's custody.[44]

If Gregory was still at Brioude when he learned of Cautinus's demise, he presumably dashed to Clermont. Whatever discomfiture the thirty-three-year old had endured during the bishop's prolonged tenure, Death's negation of Cautinus probably stirred in Gregory a feeling of hopefulness. If ever he personally harbored ambitions for an episcopal office, Clermont likely was his preferred appointment. But in the twenty years that had passed since his paternal uncle's demise, there is nothing to suggest the deacon had managed to preserve the family's luster and regional preeminence at a level it had enjoyed in the days of Gallus's episcopacy. While the ecclesiastical fortunes of Gregory's relations from his maternal line presently towered in Burgundy in 571, the deacon apparently was the family's single commodity in the Auvergne: unmarried, without children, and apparently without proximate heirs.[45] Perhaps, therefore, Gregory was insightful enough to realize that, ambitions aside, he had little to no chance of acquiring the seat at Clermont. Fortunately for him, one of the principal contenders in the field of episcopal hopefuls was the archdeacon Avitus, Gregory's own mentor.[46] Avitus likely was from the region's senatorial Aviti clan, which included past Auvergnat luminaries including the Emperor Avitus and

44 At *VSJ* 46a Gregory contrasted the outcomes of two servants who contracted the plague. A first boy who became ill was handed over, without Gregory's knowledge, to a common soothsayer who administered traditional healing techniques and confidently announced the boy would live. That servant perished. When a second boy caught the disease, Deacon Gregory made sure he received a proper curative, dust from Saint Julian's tomb mixed with water, and he survived. Multiple healthcare options were available to inhabitants of sixth-century Gaul, including healing saints, ecclesiastical rituals, holy people associated with churches, physicians, and apparently numerous popular healers. For this competitive feature of Gallic society: Flint, "Early Medieval 'Medicus'"; Kitchen, "Saints, Doctors, and Soothsayers"; James, "Sense of Wonder," 53-59; Mathisen, "Crossing the Supernatural"; Jones, *Social Mobility*, 250-335. On Gregory's thoughts about the eternal consequences of dying after consulting popular healers, see below, pp. 194-96 n. 175.

45 Gregory's anonymous sister and her husband Justinus are known to have resided for a time at Besançon; *GM* 70. Gregory's niece Eusthenia was probably still a bit too young in 571 to marry. Her eventual husband would become a count at Clermont; *PLRE* 3A: 473, s. v. "Eusthenia"; *PLRE* 3B: 945, s. v. "Nicetius 3."

46 *Historiae* 4.35. A second serious candidate for the office was the priest, Eufrasius, whose brother was Count Firminus, who had eluded Death's clutches at Arles. Gregory with marked disdain accused Eufrasius of securing gifts from Clermont's Jews, which he used to try to bribe King Sigibert into giving him the bishopric, unsuccessfully as it turned out. One reason Gregory provided for Eufrasius not acquiring the seat is that Bishop Quintianus, the mentor of Gregory's uncle Gallus, once pronounced that no member of the family of a certain Hortensius, Eufrasius being one, would ever become a bishop. The writer detailed Quintianus's curse at *VP* 4.3. For

Bishops Eparchius and Apollinaris of Clermont, plus the wife of Sidonius Apollinaris.[47] It is possible that Avitus was a distant relative of Gregory.[48] The latter probably numbered among the throng of clerics whom he depicted in the *Historiae* joining with Clermont's populace to demand Avitus as their next bishop. Ultimately King Sigibert had to approve the election.[49] According to Gregory the king so greatly admired Avitus, he insisted the prelate be consecrated in the royal's presence.[50] In the wake of Avitus's consecration, Gregory accompanied the new bishop on a tour of the diocese. Perhaps any celebratory feelings the pair felt by virtue of Avitus's accession to the cathedra dampened as they witnessed the aftermath of Death's recent handiwork through the pestilence. One notable Auvergnat plague casualty whom Gregory eulogized in his writings was a wonderworking priest named Julian from the monastery of Randau outside Clermont. A second fatality was the same monastery's abbot.[51] How many others among the faithful did Avitus and Gregory mourn as they surveyed the diocese? How many funerary basilicas and cemeteries with newly buried bodies did they visit? How many masses for the dead did they conduct? Perhaps the sermons that Bishop Avitus delivered during this tour counted among those of his orations that Gregory later would credit as second only to the psalms in shaping his religious outlook.[52]

If Death's instigation of an episcopal transfer at Clermont resulted in a bittersweet conclusion, the consequences for the menace's engagement in two more bishops' demises proved utterly dreadful for Gregory and also his brother. Death turned to Langres around 572 when Gregory's great-uncle, Bishop Tetricus, suffered a debilitating stroke and lay moribund for a protracted period.[53] Gregory and Armentaria probably were

Gregory's lingering animosities towards the Hortensii: Wood, "Ecclesiastical Politics," 48-49; Van Dam, *Saints*, 59.

47 For Avitus as part of the *gens Aviti*: Wood, "Ecclesiastical Politics," 38-39; idem, *Gregory of Tours*, 41.

48 Settipani, "Les Aviti," 150-53. Heinzelmann, "Gregory of Tours: Elements," 12, n. 18, is skeptical of Settipani's argument. Fortunatus characterized Gregory as Avitus's *alumnus*: Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 5.5.145.

49 Sigibert apparently rejected Count Firminus's last ditch effort to bribe the king to delay the consecration.

50 *Historiae* 4.43. On Sigibert's selection of Avitus in the context of the Austrasian king's expansionist policies: Halfond, "Negotiating Episcopal Support," 19-20.

51 *Historiae* 4.32. Perhaps Avitus and Gregory paid their respects to the abbot's admirable and holy successor, Sunniulf. For Sunniulf's hellish vision, see below, pp. 164-65. Gregory referenced an undated journey with Bishop Avitus to the church and village of Moissat at *GC* 40.

52 *VP* 2 prologue, and see below, p. 67.

53 *Historiae* 5.5.

entertaining hopes that Peter, presently a deacon like his brother, would fill the vacancy.[54] Problematically, Peter's recent years at Langres had not been without incident; shortly before Tetricus's impairment Peter had instigated the dismissal of a fellow deacon, Lampadius. In the *Historiae* Gregory defended his brother by explaining that Peter had been acting on behalf of the poor, whom Lampadius habitually robbed. Unfortunately for Peter, while his great-uncle lay upon his deathbed, the city's clergy opted for an episcopal replacement other than him – twice. The clerics' first selection for bishop-elect, Munderic, was tasked to serve as archpriest at a nearby village until Tetricus died, but in the interim he ran afoul of King Guntram, who instigated the prelate's exile.[55] Meanwhile, the people of Langres chose a second bishop-elect, Sylvester, yet another relation of Armentaria, perhaps even her brother.[56] At this point Death stepped in to finish off the job on Tetricus. But before Sylvester could be consecrated, Death meted an unexpected follow up blow: Sylvester incurred an egregious epileptic fit, and after two days of violent convulsing and shouting, he expired. The horrible spectacle of Sylvester's suffering emboldened Peter's enemy Lampadius to join with the deceased's son (unnamed by Gregory) and to publicly accuse Peter of using witchcraft to slay the man. This pointed accusation makes the most sense if one accepts, contrary to Gregory's later written exonerative effort, that Peter had in fact canvassed for the post upon Tetricus's incapacitation. Regardless, it proved necessary for Peter to clear his name. To do this, the deacon traveled to Lyons and appeared before a tribunal presided over by another of his great-uncles, Bishop Nicetius.[57] Peter proved his innocence by swearing an oath before Lyons' prominent clergy and laity. Clerics and laypeople at Langres, however, apparently were

54 Members of the aristocratic clan undoubtedly viewed Langres as a family see, since Tetricus and his father, Saint Gregory, had been seated on the cathedra there for around sixty-five years. In Tetricus's epitaph, almost certainly commissioned by Gregory, Fortunatus referred to Langres as a *patriae sedes*; Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 4.3.2.

55 Guntram opposed Munderic after learning that the bishop-elect had supported King Sigibert during the latter's campaign against him. Guntram ignored Munderic's petition to gain back Langres subsequent to his exile. Munderic finally fled to King Sigibert who provided him with a tiny bishopric at Alais. On the identification of Guntram as the king who imprisoned and exiled Munderic: Wood, "Individuality," 41.

56 Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 15, characterizes the likelihood of Sylvester being Armentaria's brother as "very probable." According to Gregory, Peter endorsed Sylvester's selection. While this is possible, Gregory may have inserted that tidbit to dissuade readers from imagining that Peter aspired to the see. Gregory composed *Historiae* 5.5 in response to a letter from Bishop Felix of Nantes, who insinuated that Peter coveted the position and murdered Sylvester.

57 While Tetricus was Armentaria's anonymous father's brother, Nicetius was her anonymous mother's brother; Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 10.

unimpressed by the distant proceedings, for they invited an archdeacon from Autun to become their next bishop. This time the selection stuck, and so Peter's opportunity to acquire an episcopal see dissipated in the wake of this family tussle. Armentaria presumably lamented her son's near miss, and Death moved on.[58]

It is unclear whether Peter immediately returned to Langres after his acquittal or whether he lingered with his great-uncle at Lyons. If the latter, he may have been on hand when Death arrived there on 2 April 573 to claim Bishop Nicetius's life. Recalling that Nicetius had succeeded his own uncle as bishop, Lyons was another potential family see that Armentaria may have envisioned falling to either of her sons.[59] Ironically, Nicetius's own behavior probably cost his relations their chance at following him.[60] For despite Gregory's pithy remark in the *Historiae* that Nicetius offered *caritas* to all just as the Apostle Paul had instructed, details about the bishop's conduct suggest his temperament was sometimes to the contrary.[61] For example, when Nicetius once disciplined an adulterous deacon, not only did the prelate excommunicate him, he also caused the man to be flogged multiple times in a fruitless attempt to curtail his sinful habit.[62] Gregory himself was on hand for a second incident suggestive of Nicetius's heavy-handedness. Our author wrote that Nicetius once sent a priest to demand that the city's count, Armentarius (likely another relative), not reopen a case that the bishop had ended. After the priest returned and announced the count's haughty retort before an assemblage of clergy during Nicetius's dinner, the bishop turned on the messenger and refused to bless him for uttering angry words in his presence. Nicetius then made a frightened young Deacon Gregory stand before the priests and beg the bishop to change his mind on the offending priest's behalf.[63] Perhaps not surprisingly, complaints materialized immediately after the stern Nicetius's demise; one priest offered harsh words during the

58 Because Gregory defended his brother and at the same time obviously idolized his mother, scholars simply assume that Armentaria sympathized with Peter. There really is no way of knowing Armentaria's feelings about her elder son at this point in his career. If Peter actually did support Sylvester, as Gregory wrote, perhaps he did so at Armentaria's urging. Maybe in the wake of this commotion Armentaria only felt remorse for her cousin's (or brother's) untimely demise.

59 *Historiae* 4.36. Gregory's estimation of Nicetius being bishop twenty-two years is problematic; Van Dam, *Saints*, 60-61, n. 52.

60 Cf. ibid., *Saints*, 60-62.

61 Paul's reference to *caritas*: Romans 12:18.

62 *Historiae* 4.36.

63 *VP* 8.3.

reading of the bishop's will, asserting that many had regarded the prelate as uncaring. This accusation likely rang truer for many of Lyons' clergy than Gregory's later written apologetics would have if they ever read them.

It is possible that Peter and Gregory were on hand for the aforementioned reading of Nicetius's will. The pair of presumed episcopal hopefuls probably were also present for the deceased's funeral. If so, they would have numbered among an assemblage of white-clad deacons that processed with the bishop's funeral bier. A report that Nicetius miraculously caused a blind person to recover his sight during that very procession may have entailed an effort on the part of clerics loyal to the dead bishop to establish the latter's cult and preserve dominance over the city's ecclesiastical apparatus.[64] Unfortunately for those partisans, King Guntram selected a member of his own court to become Lyons' next bishop. That appointee, Priscus, was a longtime enemy of Nicetius. Gregory did not indicate whether one of Lyons' clerics formerly hostile to Nicetius had rushed to the king's court upon the bishop's demise to request Priscus as the next prelate.[65] Given the animus that some within the clergy obviously bore towards Nicetius, however, some such scenario seems likely. According to Gregory, Bishop Priscus took extreme measures to discredit his predecessor's reputation, including ridding the community of potential relics.[66] The prelate initiated a persecution of Nicetius's former companions, which reportedly escalated to include many murders (*interficere multos*).[67] Faced with a welling backlash from the ranks of Lyons' clergy, Gregory and Peter may have judged it prudent to depart the city shortly after the funeral.[68] Perhaps they dejectedly left immediately upon hearing of Priscus's selection. Or, maybe they lingered at Lyons for a spell, prayerfully awaiting some divinely wrought change of fortune against the newly ascendant

64 *GC* 60, and see below, pp. 75-76.

65 Gregory sometimes was quite comfortable divulging the decisive role kings played in filling the vacant sees in their kingdoms. He wrote without reproach how his uncle Gallus traveled to court and gained Theuderic's support to become bishop of Clermont in 525. Cautinus traveled to court to petition King Theudebald for the same bishopric in 551, with success. Although in this case, Cautinus had offered to speak to the king on the bishop-elect Cato's behalf, and then he slipped out of the city while Cato was unaware. Otherwise, Sigibert provided royal approval for Gregory's mentor Avitus to become bishop in 571. For royal appointment as usual procedure for the bishops of Clermont: Wood, "Ecclesiastical Politics," 46-47.

66 E. g., Priscus gave the bishop's cape to a deacon who cut off the hood and refashioned it into socks; *VP* 8.5.

67 *Historiae* 4.36.

68 Backlash: Wood, *Gregory of Tours*, 10.

faction – or complicit in trying to stir one up.[69] It may be that the brothers only quit the city when Priscus's campaign against his ecclesiastical foes elevated to a level of exacting their murders.[70] Death itself, then, contributed its share amid the factionalism at Lyons in early 573. But soon it too left that city, venturing north and westwards with far more destructive designs in mind.

The deacon Gregory eventually went back to the Auvergne. Perhaps he visited his mother with Peter before departing Burgundy. Gregory apparently did a lot of traveling during his years as a cleric and deacon. As Martin Heinzelmann has asserted, one destination to which he must have journeyed, but has left no written mention of, was the court of King Sigibert. Surely it was during such visits that Sigibert and Queen Brunhild sized up the man whom they would appoint as bishop of Tours in late 573.[71] As with the Auvergnat cleric's earliest associations with Frankish royalty, so with his education, one can only admit to its impact despite a lack of solid narrative evidence. For years on end Gregory spent innumerable hours studying sacred literature and acquiring the skills to become a learned and earnest ecclesiastic.[72] The remainder of this chapter will address this influence, while also considering the lessons family members continued to impart, teachings which included among other items addressing how to confront some of the problematic, and potentially deadly, aspects of being a Gallic ecclesiastic.

Becoming Gregory II

Reliance on relatives did not end when Gregory became a cleric. The first living foster-father to nurture the aging youth was Bishop Gallus, who

69 Gregory related that Saint Nicetius appeared in dreams to two of Priscus's allies, the priest who had criticized the bishop at the will's reading and a deacon, and then beat them both in the throat; priest: *VP* 8.5; deacon: *Historiae* 4.36. Perhaps these accounts thinly veil actual early physical altercations that occurred among individuals from different clerical factions, with Gregory's partisans dishing the damage in these instances. Another deacon, whom Nicetius used to have flogged for committing adultery, shortly following the new bishop's ascension, fell from a roof to his death; *Historiae* 4.36. Yet another deacon, who irreverently made socks out of Nicetius's cape reportedly had his feet burned in a hearth by a demon; *VP* 8.5. Maybe this demon resided in an energumen who was disposed to defend a pro-Nicetius faction.

70 Peter presumably returned to Langres and Gregory to the Auvergne. Priscus proved himself to be an active participant in Burgundian ecclesiastical policy through conciliar legislation and a loyal supporter of King Guntram through to his death; Halfond, "All the King's Men," 84-87.

71 Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 32-33.

72 On Gregory's education: Riché, *Education and Culture*, 193-206.

tended to his brother's son for as many as three years before his own death in 551.[73] It likely was Gallus who entrusted the child-cleric's education to a subordinate, the eventual archdeacon and bishop, Avitus of Clermont.[74] While the length of time Avitus oversaw his charge's instruction cannot be known, the mentor's impact on Gregory was profound. Gregory wrote:

> …the blessed father Avitus, bishop of Clermont, exhorted me to study ecclesiastical works (*studium ad ecclesiastica … scripta*). If the things which I have heard in his sermons or that he has got me to read have not formed my judgment, although I cannot observe them, it is he, second only to the psalms of David, who has led me to the words of evangelical preaching, and to the stories and epistles of apostolic virtue…[75]

To place Avitus's influence second only after the psalms is praise of the highest order coming from the future bishop of Tours. While Avitus's guidance may have begun only when Gregory was a teen, the latter's intimacy with what he identified as the most formative work to shape his judgment, the psalms, dated back to his early childhood when family members sang psalms together.[76] Perhaps it was Avitus, or Gallus, who supervised Gregory's transition from merely singing the psalms to probing them to unlock their spiritual meaning.[77] Eventually, the cleric proved sufficiently versed in understanding the psalter to undertake composing a treatise *In Psalterii tractu*.[78] This work represents a product of the cleric's drive to merit a high degree of spiritual comprehension and to make visible the otherwise invisible divine mysteries of the psalms.[79]

73 Cf. Pietri, *La ville de Tours*, 257-59.

74 Riché, *Education and Culture*, 191, asserted that Gregory entered Clermont's episcopal school under Avitus after his father's illness, confusing Avitus for Gregory's uncle in the process. Heinzelmann, "Gregory of Tours: Elements," 21-22, rightly identifies Avitus's education as ecclesiastical in nature and beginning only when his pupil had become a cleric. See also Breukelaar, *Historiography*, 32.

75 *VP* 2 prologue; trans. by James, *Life*, 11-12. Gregory's mention here of Avitus being bishop alludes to the latter's status at the time the passage was written. Alternatively, see Van Dam, *Saints*, 60, n. 48, who interpreted Avitus's influence on Gregory emerging only after the former became bishop in 571.

76 Singing psalms: e. g., *VP* 8.2.

77 Gallus reportedly was singing songs, presumably psalms among them, at a monastery. Bishop Quintianus heard him and brought him to Clermont. Word of Gallus's singing caught the attention of King Theudebert and his queen, who summoned the crooner to join them at court; *VP* 6.2.

78 For *PT* as one of three exegetical works from sixth-century Gaul evidencing Merovingian intellectuals taking an interest in the Bible *per se*: Hen, "Uses of the Bible," 280.

79 On Gregory's 150 psalm headings, or *diapsalmata*, and the Christocentric uniformity they exhibit: Heinzelmann, "Die Psalmen"; idem, "Le Psautier de Grégoire."

Another method whereby late ancient Christians attempted to utilize the wisdom hidden within sacred texts was to appeal to the divine forces contained within to advise about impending actions and future developments.[80] Conducting divinatory rituals including the *sortes bibicae* and *sortes sanctorum* were controversial actions in Gaul, although undoubtedly popular, especially among ecclesiastics.[81] Here again it seems one of Gregory's relatives may have trained him in sacred communicatory techniques. Unsurprisingly given Armentaria's expertise with dreams and visions, Gregory's mother's uncle Tetricus apparently was adept at consulting the *sortes biblicae*. For example, in 556 when Prince Chramn invaded Burgundy while Chlothar was away battling the Saxons, the prince approached the *castrum* of Dijon. Although the king certainly was more powerful than the son, Chramn was hot off of a successful siege of Chalon. Uncertain how to respond to the prince's petition to enter the town, Tetricus caused his priests to set three holy books on a church altar and await God's response. During the readings at the next mass the priests recited passages randomly selected from the aforementioned books. The ominous tenor of all three readings convinced the bishop to treat the rebel prince accordingly; Tetricus allowed Chramn to take communion in Dijon's extramural churches but denied him entry to the fortified town.[82] Years later Gregory himself presided over a session of the *sortes biblicae* at the request of another rebellious prince, King Chilperic's son Merovech, who situated himself inside Martin's basilica claiming asylum. Merovech wished to confirm the veracity of a soothsayer's prior prediction about his future. Three books were placed on the altar and the prince spent three days praying, fasting and keeping vigils. Finally, Gregory read out the passages to Merovech. The blatantly negative messages conveyed by the readings left Merovech so distraught, he soon afterwards abandoned sanctuary at the basilica.[83] It seems likely that Gregory adopted his divinatory proclivities from Tetricus, whom the cleric may have regarded as his next surrogate father, perhaps along with

80 On the *sortes biblicae and sortes sanctorum*: Klingshirn, "Defining the *Sortes Sanctorum*"; idem, "Christian Divination." On the distinctiveness of the Christian method of book divination versus those of late ancient Jews and pagans: Wiśniewski, "Pagans, Jews, Christians."

81 However, the earliest evidence for the *sortes biblicae* being condemned is only from the eighth century; Klingshirn, "Defining the *Sortes Sanctorum*," 124-29.

82 *Historiae* 4.16.

83 *Historiae* 5.14. Previously, when Gregory had agreed to read Scripture to Merovech, the bishop opened Proverbs to a random passage that discouraged insulting one's father, which is what the prince had just been doing. Gregory interpreted this coincidence to indicate that God had selected the verse.

Nicetius, after Gallus's expiration. Gregory apparently visited his Burgundian relations frequently during his teens and twenties.

However, hazarding journeys of long distance could be fraught with difficulties and dangers, as Gregory undoubtedly realized having been raised on the harrowing adventure stories his father and other relatives used to tell.[84] Indeed, during one trip to Burgundy to visit his mother at Chalon, Gregory, while a deacon, was beset along with his riding companions by murderous bandits.[85] As author Gregory recalled how he initially responded to the deadly peril by appealing for Saint Martin's aid.[86] This invocation caused the enemy to fear, at which point the deacon remembered the Apostle Paul's admonition at Romans 12:20 and offered the foes food and drink. The scriptural citation reportedly confounded the brigands all the more, and so they left in disarray as if they had been pounded with clubs. As a hagiographer Gregory intended this tale to teach readers how divine power resides within the very words of Scripture.[87] Behind the pious façade the anecdote may further suggest that as a deacon of at least twenty-five years of age when the incident occurred, Gregory had learned another lesson – one he did not impart in *VSM* 1 –, that an aristocratic cleric should never travel the highways of Gaul without his own *viri strenui*.[88] I suspect that along with Saint Martin and the helpful Bible verse, tougher elements of Gregory's entourage helped bring about the bandits' hasty about face. Gregory's increasing familiarity with a world wherein one might encounter the occasional murderous prince, potentially murderous bandits, and sometimes murderous clerics presumably only strengthened his conviction to rely on saintly powers. He deemed it not only beneficial but mandatory for Christians to invoke the saints while navigating the pitfalls of a treacherous world. Helpful in showing Gregory how to tackle this-worldly problems were his maternal relations' lessons in cultic practices of a more manipulative variety.

Bishop Tetricus had been promoting the cult of his own father, Gregory of Langres, since the latter's namesake was a one-year-old. When the elder Gregory died at his episcopal see, Tetricus (presumably) arranged for an

84 *GM* 83, *Historiae* 3.15. On the dangers of travel: Van Dam, *Saints*, 116.

85 *VSM* 1.36.

86 The fact that this episode happened after Saint Martin had healed Gregory of fever in 563 helps explain him appealing to Martin for aid. Of course, being the bishop of Tours when he wrote the tale may have impacted his memory, too. Perhaps in actuality Gregory invoked a number of saints for help, Martin being one among them.

87 Saintly power in books: Leyser, "'Divine Power Flowed,'" 286-88.

88 For *viri strenui* operating on behalf of ecclesiastical patrons: Jones, *Social Mobility*, 237-41.

elaborate public funeral that included a lengthy procession to bring the corpse to the prelate's hometown, Dijon.[89] Once within the *castrum*'s walls, as the corpse was being translated to a basilica for burial, porters set down the bier before a prison where inmates began to wail for the saint, who, we recall, was formerly a count. The captives cried out: "Have pity on us, most pious lord, so that those whom you did not free while you were on this earth, may obtain their liberty from you now that you are dead and possess the heavenly kingdom."[90] When freed from their bonds the prisoners left the jail and filed in behind the cortege, after which a local judge pardoned them of their crimes.[91] Behind this and other late ancient accounts of miraculous prison release sometimes lurk choreographed episodes of ritualized emancipations followed by actual pardons negotiated by clerics with secular officials.[92] Tetricus presumably arranged for the Dijonnaise prisoners' discharge; the grateful captives reciprocated by invoking Gregory's name and, upon release, confirming his *virtus* and his soul's heavenly whereabouts before onlookers.[93] Maybe Tetricus and the clergy of Langres continued to enact ritual prison releases at the saint's festivals years after when the young cleric Gregory visited them. Attesting to Gregory's adoption of ritual releases are multiple reports in the *VSM* of Martin liberating prisoners during the saint's festivals, as well as on Easter.[94]

89 *VP* 7.3. Although he was bishop at Langres, the elder Gregory preferred to reside at the *castrum* of Dijon (64 kilometers distance as the crow flies). He visited his see to conduct services. Other bishops arrived for Gregory's funeral five days after his demise.

90 *VP* 7.3; trans. by James, *Life*, 46.

91 On miraculous prison release as a ritual practice: Jones, *Social Mobility*, 194-209. Clerics also may have enacted the ritual outside Dijon prior to the corpse being brought into the town, for Gregory provided a story about a single criminal being released on the road from Langres to Dijon at *VP* 7.4.

92 Tales for which hagiographers depicted such liberations during moments germane to the transference of ecclesiastical authority, such as during a bishop's funeral, or at occasions when numerous congregants and pilgrims were gathered, as during a saint's festival, quite possibly describe antecedent performances of actual rituals. This is not to suggest that an actual prison release lies behind every such anecdote, even in Gregory's corpus. For example, the prison release depicted in *VSJ* 4, which follows *Passio Iuliani* 4-5, seems to have been a pious fiction. For prison release as a literary topos: Graus, "Die Gewalt bei den Anfängen."

93 Crediting saints for the release of prisoners should be seen in the context of longstanding Christian compassion towards prisoners. Such rituals obviously shared with other cultic activities in the church's social effort to heal communities. A similar compassionate late ancient practice derived from the early church's care for prisoners, but adjusted to the times, was episcopal efforts to ransom captives seized during the many little wars waged by barbarian kings. Not all of those captives were prisoners of war. See Klingshirn, "Charity and Power."

94 4 July festival: *VSM* 2.35 (577), 4.39 (592); 11 November festival: *VSM* 4.41 (592); Easter: *VSM* 4.16 (590); see also *VSM* 4.26 (during Martin's July festival but at Reims, and not involving Gregory),

Returning to Langres, a few years into Tetricus's episcopal tenure, the prelate determined to improve the ability for pilgrims and congregants to access and revere his holy father by building a large vaulted apse onto Saint John's basilica to house the saint's tomb. During a ceremonial translation of Gregory's remains, the lid of the sarcophagus reportedly slid away revealing how the corpse's face remained intact. It seemed the saint was asleep rather than dead, and his clothes had not decayed.[95] Although the incorruptibility of saints' corpses is a common hagiographic topos, that this event happened during the corpse's transference lends credence for suspecting Tetricus actually used the occasion to arrange for a public viewing of the patriarch's still well-preserved body. The younger Gregory was only seven years old when this translation ceremony happened, so he probably only learned about it, and revisited it, during stays with his great-uncle and brother, or perhaps his mother. Perhaps while they recounted the miracle Tetricus or Peter or Armentaria ruminated with Gregory on the theological and eschatological implications of vitality lingering for pious individuals' bodies. As author Gregory assured readers that the visible integrity of Saint Gregory's corpse revealed how the bishop while alive had accumulated divine grace through piously rejecting corporeal passions. He also explained that the imagery of the body's immaculate condition assured the man was a recipient of eternal life.[96]

While the younger Gregory did not observe the miracles his saintly great-grandfather performed at his funeral and bodily translation, he did report witnessing an astonishing display of Saint Gregory's powers performed on Langres' demoniacs. Keeping energumens at churches was a cultic activity

4.35 (Gregory involved but not during a festival). Prisoners liberated at Tours knew well that whenever the city's invisible patron liberated them they should flee for sanctuary either to the saint's basilica or the cathedral where eventually the bishop (the living one) would secure their pardon. Easter was appropriate for prison releases because the liberations represented redemption, the result of Christ's passion and resurrection; Van Dam, *Saints*, 113-14. It was prior to Easter 590 when Gregory argued with one of his priests about bodily resurrection; *Historiae* 10.13. Furthermore, the date of Easter was in dispute that year, which resulted in Christians celebrating on two days; *Historiae* 10.23. It so happened that a prisoner escaped captivity and fled to the cathedral at Tours on the day Gregory celebrated the festival; *VSM* 4.16. In addition to verifying that the date Gregory chose was the real Easter, this prisoner's release may also have provided the bishop an opportunity to preach to congregants about the reality of bodily resurrection; cf. Van Dam, *Saints*, 113.

95 *VP* 7.4.

96 Gregory intended his *Vita Gregorii* to teach readers and listeners how they should emulate the holy bishop's corporeal renunciation and that through doing so they could potentially receive a like future reward. For Gregory's imagery of perfectly preserved bodies of saints prefiguring salvation: Kitchen, "Gregory of Tours," 416-19.

more frequent and widespread than ritual prison releases and viewings of saints' corpses. Back when the older Gregory was a bishop, the former count quickly gained a reputation for expelling demons from possessed people by merely tracing the sign of the cross over them with his hand.[97] Whenever the prelate would temporarily leave Langres, "many people" (*multi*) began using the ex-judge's menacing stock and tracing the cross to exercise demons.[98] These disappearances our author referenced likely included the many instances when the bishop abandoned his episcopal see for his beloved Dijon. The *multi* presumably were Langres' clerics, who repurposed the stock into a relic capable of replicating their oft-absentee bishop's *virtutes*. If so, the clerics' activity echoes the zealous Arelesian clergy under Saint Gregory's contemporary, Caesarius of Arles, who similarly used their own bishop's possessions as relics while Caesarius was away, or without his knowledge.[99] Years after Bishop Gregory's demise, clerics at Langres were still employing this stock to cleanse demoniacs, and the younger Gregory at some point was present to watch. He wrote: "The demoniacs, too, when they confess the name of the saint at his tomb, are often purified. And several times we have seen these men transfixed to the wall by the stock he used to carry in his hand … just as if they were held there by stakes sharpened at the end."[100] Judging by what Gregory claimed to see, the clergy and energumens at Langres may have devised a clever and particularly spectacular application for the famed relic.[101] This action coupled with the demoniacs' tortured invocations will have provided churchgoers with both visual and audible proof of the saint's *praesentia*.[102]

Gregory's first viewing of Langres' energumens being cleansed may have been among his earliest examples for witnessing effective ecclesiastical utilization of demoniacs to orchestrate proof of a saint's *virtutes*. Another exorcism Gregory beheld while still an impressionable cleric was performed by a miracle-working priest from the monastery of Randau named Julian, who while attending Saint Julian's basilica at Brioude expelled a demon

97 Gregory's association of count and exorcist was apposite for a late ancient audience. On the "judicial overtones" of exorcisms: Brown, *Cult of the Saints*, 108-11.

98 *VP* 7.2.

99 E. g., Cyprian of Toulon et al., *Vita Caesarii* 2.13-15. Two priests who distributed Caesarius's relics while he lived remained committed to extolling the bishop's sanctity after his death by composing one of the two books for his *Vita*. For Caesarius's relics: Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles*, 166-70.

100 *VP* 7.5; trans. by James, *Life*, 48.

101 Compare Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogi* 3.6.2, for a claim that a demoniac was lifted into the air when Bishop Martin of Tours walked towards him.

102 On possession and exorcism as a "*psychodrama*": Brown, *Cult of the Saints*, 111.

with a single word.[103] Eventually Gregory himself became expert at relying on energumens. One particular use he had for them was to declare the *praesentia* of God's invisible friends during ceremonies commemorating installation of saints' relics.[104] During one such installation at the Brioude basilica several demoniacs complained that Julian was inviting five other saints to torture them. Gregory appended a telling remark to the anecdote focused on the energumens' contribution: "By making these comments and others like them these possessed men conjured up in men's minds the saints of God in such a way that no one doubted that the saints were lingering there."[105] Convincing an audience of the saints' presence was, of course, the whole point to the drama. But unlike prison releases, which always required clerical instigation, not every exorcism or demonic exclamation necessarily involved a ritualized production. Most possessed people at Gallic churches, like most physically ill people who ventured to the saints' tombs, came of their own volition in hopes of receiving bodily and spiritual health, for which there was no guarantee. Some became fixtures on church properties alongside the registered poor, church guardians, and a variety of lesser clerics and pious laity of low status dependent on the churches for sustenance, while others were as transient as most pilgrims. While some energumens voiced the messages of their ecclesiastical betters on cue, most communicated their very real pains and even gave expression to personal anxieties.[106] The tortured shouts and screams coming from these latter demoniacs probably convinced unsettled onlookers of the reality of invisible demonic forces better than the coached messages of a few ever could.[107] Theirs too were the unprompted explosions of blood, vomit and excrement, followed by genuine expressions of relief, which substantiated that the

103 *Historiae* 4.32.

104 Multiple saints' relics installed at Saint Julian's basilica: *VSJ* 30; relics of Saint Julian to Tours; *VSJ* 35; relics of John the Baptist to Tours: *GM* 14. See Shanzer, "So Many Saints," 31-33.

105 *VSJ* 30; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 183.

106 On methods for detecting the motivations of demoniacs presented in late ancient hagiography: Grey, "Demoniacs, Dissent, and Disempowerment." During a procession from the cathedral to Martin's basilica at Christmas 575, an energumen shouted out that the city's patron had abandoned Tours for Rome, thereby causing consternation among the whole congregation. The subsequent cure of a disabled man's limbs during mass disproved the demon's claim. Although inclusion of this tale in *VSM* 2 served Gregory's purpose of contrasting the community's sudden emotional reversal from despair to elation, the bishop in no way would have been pleased at the time of the incident when this seeming rogue demon voiced its frightening declaration, which was unhelpful to the ecclesiastic's intent. Van Dam, *Saints*, 141, n. 60, has reminded that this miracle happened during a moment of acute insecurity at Tours, in the interim shortly after King Sigibert's death and before Chilperic had yet taken the city.

107 Brown, *Cult of the Saints*, 108-09.

world's invisible holy denizens were committed to alleviating, liberating, and saving Christian society's most distressed elements.

Gregory put some of his familial lessons about cultic exercises to practice in climates of factionalism. Two anecdotes from the *GC* provide rare glimpses of him as cleric at Clermont during Cautinus's problematic episcopal tenure. First, at the church of Saint Venerandus a vault collapsed on a sarcophagus thereby exposing a female corpse. The girl's face and limbs were pristinely preserved, and her white robe had not decayed. Gregory reported that some claimed the girl's jewelry had been removed in secret "lest the bishop find out."[108] This strange comment may be a thinly veiled reference to clerics in charge of this particular basilica, perhaps friends of Gregory since he apparently spent time there, hiding the valuables away before the unnamed bishop, Cautinus, could get hold of them.[109] But just how special was the dead woman? According to Gregory, after the corpse lay exposed for a full year, the widow of the recently deceased Count Georgius fell ill, after which she became blind. The dead girl then appeared to the matron in a dream and promised she would recover her sight if a new top was placed on the uncovered sarcophagus. The widow faithfully obliged and was healed. In addition to a recovery of physical vision, the widow, and Gregory, gained insight to the hereafter, for the events revealed "without doubt" (*non ambigitur*) that the unspoiled, deceased girl possessed a *nobilis meritum*, meaning she ranked among heaven's saints.[110] The anonymous entombed beauty joined four other saints buried in the basilica who were due the community's reverence, as was a monk buried nearby, between the churches of Saints Venerandus and Illidius.[111] Obviously it was Gregory's and his companions' objective to hype the holiness of the occupants of this burial church adjacent to the building where Saint Illidius had once saved him from death.[112]

108 *GC* 34: *ne episcopus sentiret*.

109 The church of Saint Venerandus was adjacent to Saint Illidius's basilica; *GC* 34-35. If in fact Gregory's usual residence was on an estate removed from Clermont, perhaps this neck of the city's ecclesiastical complex served as his preferred haunt whenever clerical obligations required his presence in the town.

110 *GC* 34.

111 *GC* 35-36. The other saints buried in the basilica were Bishops Venerandus and Nepotianus, the martyr Liminius, and a certain Saint Galla. Gregory noted that the grave of a monk named Alexander placed between the two basilicas was a source for the faithful acquiring curative tomb dust. On Gregory's habit for reading inscriptions on tombs: Handley, *Death, Society and Culture*, 175-76.

112 Perhaps Count Georgius's widow was a partisan who worked alongside Gregory and his associates to bolster that basilica's holy credentials and its clergy's ecclesiastical authority. On

A second tale which identifies an anonymous saint entombed in Saint Venerandus's church is suggestive of Gregory learning something of his relatives' tricks of the ecclesiastical trade. Gregory reportedly used to see a beggar who frequently sat on an elevated tomb in the basilica. One day it happened that a loud noise rang out, the tomb split, and the beggar was hurled across the room. Gregory interpreted the event as proving the tomb contained "something divine" (*divinum aliquid*). He further suspected that it showed the beggar had committed some offense for which the saint judged him unworthy.[113] Perhaps behind this anecdote is a veiled reference to the basilica's custodians tending to a *matricularius* who wasn't sufficiently attentive to the clergy's earnest efforts to promote the building's holy aura. Or just possibly the beggar was one of Cautinus's clients who trespassed where he shouldn't have and got his just deserts.

Another vignette suggestive of Gregory employing cultic practices in a faction-ridden atmosphere involves the aftermath of his great-uncle Nicetius of Lyons' demise. Our author did not record a miraculous prison release during Nicetius's funeral in early 573. In the contentious atmosphere of Lyons after that unpopular prelate's expiration, perhaps clerical advocates for the latter's sanctity, including the deacons Peter and Gregory, were in no position to arrange for the would-be saint to set free the city's criminals. One miracle that did happen during the funeral procession bears ample clues that ecclesiastical partisans attempted to initiate the newly deceased prelate's cult. During the bishop's funeral procession, a blind youth reportedly heard three commands coming from a disembodied voice demanding he crawl beneath the bier and promising a cure if he did. Heeding the calls, the youth advanced and mingled among the "throng of white-clad deacons" – was he checking in with Gregory and Peter? – before ultimately crawling under the bier. There he invoked Nicetius's name and immediately recovered his eyesight.[114] The antecedent action for this miracle story likely involved some public display which included the boy vociferously crediting the dead man with the healing. The proposition that an actual effort to initiate Nicetius's cult lay behind the narrative becomes particularly plausible given subsequent developments involving the formerly blind youth. Shortly after the funeral, clerical enthusiasts apparently rewarded the newly healed boy by assigning him the task of lighting lamps among other services in the very

the possibility the widow's husband was a relation of Gregory: Selle-Hosbach, *Prosopographie merowingischer*, 100.

113 *GC* 35.

114 *GC* 60.

church where the dead bishop now rested.[115] But then, news arrived from afar that King Guntram had appointed Priscus, Bishop Nicetius's old foe, to the episcopal seat. Without providing context for the ecclesiastical factional infighting that then ensued at Lyons, Gregory in the *GC* reported that some of Lyons' *maiores* started bullying the boy and denied him his food allotment. It appears therefore that the youth, after initially enjoying employment and support from church funds, now became subject to retaliation by Priscus's minions along with other promoters of Nicetius's sanctity. Apparently the boy's conviction did not wilt in the face of this discrimination, however, for when last we hear of him, he was still touting Nicetius's holiness by claiming that a vision of the bishop – now he could see the saint – sent him to request clothes and nourishment from King Guntram, who piously complied.[116] Perhaps Nicetius's great-nephews accompanied the youth to the king's court in order to aid him in recouping some degree of support before the deacons returned to their respective cities. This affair reveals that every effort to employ cultic tactics did not end ideally for Gregory; nevertheless, taken together, his exertions versus highway bandits, at Saint Venerandus's basilica, and at Nicetius's funeral seem to indicate that the maturing cleric spent no small amount of his middle years learning how to master the techniques for operating a saint's cult to his benefit.

Studium ad ecclesiastica scripta

In contrast to several rousing incidents that happened while Gregory was progressing through the clerical *cursus honorum*, much of the time from his teens to early thirties must have entailed quieter moments of attending church services, rehearsing liturgies and progressing in the *studium ecclesiasticae scriptae* under Avitus's tutelage. Through his literary studies Gregory strengthened his already substantial faith in the saints while also extending and refining his comprehension of the unseen divine workings of the world and the role the saints played in them. One spiritual activity that Gregory and family practiced for which readings provided validation was encountering saints and angels in dreams and visions. For example,

115 Lisa Bailey, "Within and Without," 119-22, considers this blind boy along with many others in the context of a wide array of non-secular lay people who participated in church life without being ordained, living by a rule, or taking vows. On the importance of distinguishing the terms lay and secular: ibid., 30-31.

116 *GM* 60. Because Gregory did not refer to this particular vision as a dream (*visio noctis*), it appears the writer intended to mean that it took the form of a this-worldly apparition.

Gregory read in Sulpicius Severus's *Dialogi* that heavenly beings frequently had communicated with the living Saint Martin. In addition to the confessor conversing with the Virgin Mary, Saints Agnes and Thecla, and the Apostles Peter and Paul, an angel once brought Martin a report of proceedings for a church council he did not attend.[117] From this episode Gregory may have concluded that Bishop Martin possessed a high degree of merit in order to deserve to actually see his heavenly visitors. Otherwise, Isabel Moreira has identified Prudentius as a potential influence on Gregory's thoughts about who could receive oneiric divine messages. In the *Hymnus ante Somnum* Prudentius commented that while Christ discloses divine mysteries to just persons through dreams, ordinary Christians, himself included, should not expect to have such visions on account of their sinfulness.[118] Prudentius was a source whom Gregory frequently cited to lend support to his own position for various topics. The poet's stance that a person must deserve to experience a vision complements Gregory's homegrown sensibility that spiritual worth governed the extent to which one might encounter the divine, either through a dream or an actual vision. Prudentius's assertion that it was sin which prevented one from meriting a visionary dream echoes Gregory's reasoning that his own sinfulness prevented him from observing close up a sacred light that emitted from the Virgin Mary's relics at Marsat.[119]

As it did for dreams and visions, so could ecclesiastical literature clarify details pertaining to the retrieval of divine knowledge by regarding celestial phenomena and extraordinary natural occurrences. Individuals willing to forecast others' futures by consulting the stars apparently remained active in Gaul, despite enduring attempts of Christian authors to taint astrology by associating it with paganism and heresy. The latter efforts caused stargazers with a desire to appear orthodox to justify where they stood.[120] From the *Hymnus Epiphaniae* by Prudentius Gregory derived a popular explanation that Christ's birth-star established His dominion over the stars, meaning that astrologers' claims that stars had causal properties were no longer valid.[121] The same poet's writings also enabled Gregory to appreciate that comets revealed insights into the divine mood, in particular by forecasting cataclysms and the demise of kings.[122] Historical writings that Gregory consulted which

117 Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogi* 2.13.1-8.

118 Moreira, *Dreams, Visions*, 86-87; Prudentius, *Cathemerinon* 6.113-18.

119 *GM* 8. See above, p. 48.

120 Halfond, "*Tenebrae Refulgeant*," § 16-22.

121 Prudentius, *Cathemerinon* 12.5-40; McCluskey, *Astronomies and Cultures*, 104; Halfond, "*Tenebrae Refulgeant*," § 12.

122 *CSR* 34.

chronicled signs and portents include the Eusebius/Jerome chronicle and Orosius's *Historiae adversum paganos*.[123] Unleashed by the sanction of his sources, Gregory began to cast his fastidiously discerning eyes to the skies and across the Gallic landscape to ascertain divinely given information both practical and hidden. He watched for extraordinary phenomena, and when they occurred he awaited some subsequent development to which the sign could be connected. One report that presumably derives from Gregory and his clerical confreres' astronomical efforts chronicled the appearance of a partial solar eclipse and a comet among other celestial irregularities, all of which happened ahead of the plague that devastated the Auvergne in 571.[124] An extraordinary terrestrial upheaval that presaged another disaster, even as it constituted one, was a landslide adjacent to Lake Geneva in 563 which caused the Rhone River to flood. Gregory reported concerning this *magnum prodigium* that the inundation of waters resulting from this spillage of earth carried off countless unsuspecting people along with livestock, churches and residences. He conveyed that the cresting waters even overflowed the walls of Geneva.[125]

Gregory's literary studies clarified how invisible agents and forces interacted with the visible world in fulfillment of the divine plan and according to divinely instituted patterns. Following countless examples derived from Scripture, Orosius, and other written sources the cleric learned to identify catastrophes like the 563 landslide and flood to a just and angry God. When considering the biblical Flood in the *Historiae*, Gregory explained how God's ire was unlike that of humans: "He is moved to anger so that he may fill us with awe, He drives us forth so that He may call us back, He is enraged

123 de Nie, *Views*, 31-33. De Nie, ibid., 32, remarked how Gregory aligned closely with Lactantius in terms of the kind of prodigies they reported.

124 *Historiae* 4.31. An earlier celestial event that Gregory may have witnessed was a solar eclipse reported for the kalends of October 563; *Historiae* 4.31. Scholars have been able to verify some of the phenomena Gregory reported. The aforementioned eclipse happened on 3 October; McCluskey, *Astronomies and Cultures*, 108-10. For lunar eclipses reported in 577 and 582: *Historiae* 5.23, 6.21; Schove and Fletcher, *Chronology of Eclipses*, 101-03. Gregory recorded more instances of portentous comets during his episcopacy: Merovech's death around 578: *Historiae* 5.18; epidemic in 580: *Historiae* 5.41; plague in Narbonne in 582: *Historiae* 6.14.

125 *Historiae* 4.31. Scientists have verified this landslide's occurrence. A computer model derived from a site survey and a soil analysis attests that the falling earth caused a tsunami in 563. The evidence confirms Gregory and Marius of Avenches' independent claims that the waters breached Geneva's walls; Kremer, Simpson, and Giradclos, "Giant Lake Geneva Tsunami." Gregory described the landslide in the same chapter in which he considered the 571 plague, which happened eight years later. One garners a proper date for the landslide only from the Burgundian chronicler; Marius of Avenches, *Chronicon* s. a. 563.

so that He may reform us."[126] As surely as Gregory accepted that God sent the first Flood on account of "the sins of a people (*iniquitates populi*) who refused to walk in His path," so too did he realize how God justly caused subsequent disasters including the 563 flood for the same reason, and He would continue to do so.[127] Recurrent disasters prompted by buildups of human iniquity was a pattern contained in the divine plan and set into history. That God designed the universe to operate according to patterns that recur over time was one of the most significant concepts Gregory embraced by virtue of his *studium ad ecclesiastica scripta*.[128]

The exegetical practice of identifying how particular people and events within the Bible prefigure subsequent people and events in the same text, typology, was well-established among patristic authors including Eusebius, Jerome, and Augustine.[129] Gregory became well versed in typological interpretation as is indicated by his utilization of vocabulary associated with the exegetical exercise (e. g., *typus*, *forma*, *figura*).[130] He will have encountered typological interpretation and terms in a broad array of the writings he studied. For example, one of his favorites, Prudentius, opened the *Psychomachia* with a preface wherein the poet wrote that Abraham's "historical" fight against the gentiles prefigured subsequent human opposition to vices, while the late birth of Sarah's son symbolized the "fruits" that those who overcome vice (the poem's attentive readers) will receive with Christ's help. This fruit that the purified readers eventually will bear signifies "the eschatological entrance of Christ into individual human beings

126 *Historiae* 1.4; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 70. Beyond this statement, Gregory hardly ever explicitly attributed spectacular calamities and mass loss of life depicted in his text to God discouraging humans against committing sin. The writer's remarks after describing the landslide are illustrative. Instead of providing a general comment on human sinfulness afterwards, he instead narrowed the moral message to criticize his especial bête noire, greed, by focusing on the fate of thirty monks who died while busily scarfing up precious metals from the ruins of a collapsed fortress.

127 *Historiae* 1.4; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 70.

128 De Nie, *Word, Image and Experience*, IX, 262-64.

129 Beryl Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, 6-7, briefly treats typology in a quick review of patristic exegesis which concentrates on allegory; ibid., 1-36. See also *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2d ed., 14: 254-55. Gregory followed the typological design of the earliest of this trio of Church Fathers, Eusebius, by asserting that Christ appeared to various Old Testament figures such as Abraham and Moses among others; Heinzelmann, "Works of Gregory," 285-86.

130 On possible sources for Gregory's typology: de Nie, *Views*, 74-75. Typology in the *Historiae*: Thürlemann, *Historische Diskurs*, 85-100; Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 127-66; idem, "Structures typologiques." Typology in Gregory's hagiography: Kitchen, *Saints' Lives*, 75-92; idem, "Gregory of Tours," 102-09. Typology in hagiography in general: Van Uytfanghe, *Stylisation biblique*.

and into the Church."[131] Another writer familiar to Gregory from whom he probably borrowed a specific cluster of typological associations was Avitus of Vienne, whose five-book versified biblical history from Creation to the Exodus, *De Spiritalis Historiae Gestis*, has typological interpretations interspersed throughout.[132] In that work's first book, Avitus addressed how Christ's death on the cross "followed the figurative model" (*indicium … secuta est*) of Adam's "historical" sleep during extraction of the rib, while Eve symbolizes the Church.[133] Avitus further elucidated how the water that poured from the wound Christ received while on the cross typifies baptism, while the Lord's blood symbolizes the martyrs' blood.[134] Identically with Avitus, Gregory at *Historiae* 1.1 identified Adam before sin as a "type" of Christ and Eve as a symbol of the Church. He also asserted that the flow of water and blood from Christ's side during the crucifixion symbolized the Lord's creation of the immaculate Church.[135] As Martin Heinzelmann has asserted, Gregory intended *Historiae* 1 as "a kind of spiritual guide for the understanding of the Christian mysteries."[136] Our author continued to deploy typological terms in the account of the Flood story, wherein he identified Noah as yet another *tipus* of Christ. Likewise, he wrote how "the shape of the Ark bears a type (*tipum*) of the Mother Church, which moves forward through the waves and between the rocks of life here below, protecting us in her maternal bosom from evils which threaten us, and defending us in her loving embrace and guardianship."[137] Here Gregory indicated how the Ark as a *tipus* for the Church would continue to press forward through time offering people protection from evils. Implied in the passage is Gregory's impression that the Flood is a *tipus* for all disasters that occur throughout history, the function of which, as the author explained, is to drive sinners to Mother Church and thence back to God. Other overt typological connections Gregory made in *Historiae* 1 include Joseph and Zerubbabel as types of Christ,

131 Pollmann, *Baptized Muse*, 53-57; quoted at 57. For the typological term, *ad figuram*; ibid., 56. On the distinction between the diachronic aspect of typology and timeless aspect of allegory, see ibid., 56 with n. 87.

132 Gregory indicated his familiarity with Avitus's corpus by listing his works in full; *Historiae* 2.34. Avitus claimed he distributed "types" throughout his text: Avitus of Vienne, *De spiritualis historiae gestis* 5.718: *figuras explicuit vates*; cited by Pollmann, *Baptized Muse*, 64.

133 Avitus of Vienne, *De spiritualis historiae gestis* 1.160-64, 168-69; Pollmann, *Baptized Muse*, 65-66. On Eve: "…the church rose from his rib and became his bride"; quoted at ibid., 66.

134 Avitus of Vienne, *De spiritualis historiae gestis* 1.165-67; Pollmann, *Baptized Muse*, 65, 67.

135 *Historiae* 1.1. If Avitus's poetic history was in fact Gregory's source for culling these types, this apparently is where his reliance on that work precipitously ended. See below, p. 116.

136 Heinzelmann, "Works of Gregory," 296.

137 *Historiae* 1.4; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 70-71.

crossing the Red Sea and the column of cloud as symbols for baptism, and the column of fire as a symbol for the Holy Spirit.[138]

Gregory ended his use of typological terminology in *Historiae* 1 with his last consideration of an Old Testament event, the Babylonian Captivity. But as Heinzelmann has indicated, this did not mean Gregory was through with typological interpretation in the *Historiae* and beyond.[139] In the chapter following that on the Israelites' liberation from Babylon, a type for salvation, Gregory jumped half a millennium to the era of the Savior Incarnate. In nine chapters covering events from Christ's birth to ascension, Gregory concentrated on the figure's soteriological aspect, mentioning how He provided the grace of baptism (*baptismi gratiam*), how miracles proved He was God, and how after the passion a darkness befell the earth causing many people to convert.[140] Typologically, Christ marks the central figure in salvation history as the fulfillment of Adam. Whereas "old Adam" lost paradise, Christ "the new Adam" comes to restore it.[141] Very tellingly, in both the *capitulum* and narrative for the last chapter concerning Christ, Gregory intentionally paired mention of the Lord's heavenly ascension with the "perishing" (*interitus*) of Pilate and Herod. This is one of many instances of our author presenting parallel accounts of good and bad figures – Danuta Shanzer calls this literary technique a "diptych" – who incur opposite ends.[142] We will have occasion to return to this and others of Gregory's diptychs in Part II of this book. Following his material on Christ, Gregory provided several tales about apostles and martyrs, whom, as Heinzelmann argues, the author regarded as types of Christ.[143] Typologically, saints become those individuals who fulfill Christ by donning the "new Adam" and through whom Christ continues to operate on earth. Soteriologically the martyrs and confessors become instruments through whom divine protection, grace and favor is imparted to humans potentially up to the final act of salvation history, the Last Judgement. Gregory concluded *Historiae* 1 with thirteen chapters primarily focused on the career of the Christ-like saint with whom he most closely associated himself during his years as a bishop and author, Saint Martin. The first of these chapters places Martin's birth alongside

138 Joseph: *Historiae* 1.9; Red Sea and columns of cloud and fire: *Historiae* 1.10; Zerubbabel: *Historiae* 1.15. See Heinzelmann, "Structures typologiques," 579-88.

139 Heinzelmann, "Works of Gregory," 300.

140 *Historiae* 1.20.

141 Kitchen, *Saints' Lives*, 76.

142 Antithesis: Heinzelmann: *Gregory of Tours*, 150-51. Diptych: Shanzer, "So Many Saints," 24; eadem, "History, Romance, Love, and Sex," 407.

143 Heinzelmann, "Works of Gregory," 299-300.

Helena's discovery of the True Cross, thereby establishing the saint's special association with Christ.[144] A chapter on Martin's *adventus* in Gaul indicates how the confessor's miracles prove Christ is God, just as Jesus's miracles had done while He was on the earth.[145] The final chapter of the book considers Martin's death, recording how the confessor *feliciter migravit ad Christum*.[146] Heinzelmann rightly interprets that Gregory intended his depiction of the patron of Tours in the *Historiae* to represent the first modern Christ-type; the Christ-like Martin ushered the possibility of salvation to *nostrum tempus*.[147]

Alongside the explicitly typological *Historiae* 1, a second place where Gregory exhibited a strong typological tendency is the prefaces of *VP*. For most prologues of *VP* (each *vita* has one), the author introduced a theme which the saint in question represents. Gregory included in the prologues citations from the Old or New Testaments (sometimes both) to reveal how the saint adhered to, or fulfilled, some particular aspect of the divine plan. The temporal difference between biblical citations and saint renders each association a typological interpretation; New Testament fulfills (and clarifies) Old Testament, and saint fulfills, or actualizes, both.[148] By showing how the saints in *VP*, including several of his own relatives, exemplified particular scriptural passages, Gregory presented them as typological fulfillments of Christ, who Himself had been the maker for both Testaments.[149] For example, Gallus of Clermont exemplified the virtue of rejecting earthly pomp, like a bird fleeing a snare (Psalm 124.7).[150] Gregory of Langres personified humility and persecuted himself for the glory of the Lord (I Corinthians 1:31).[151] Nicetius of Lyons was a product of God's foreknowledge and fulfilled Jeremiah 1:15, Matthew 1:25, and Romans 8:29.[152] As types of Christ, the

144 *Historiae* 1.36.

145 *Historiae* 1.39.

146 *Historiae* 1.48.

147 Heinzelmann, "Works of Gregory," 301. Less convincing is Heinzelmann's idea that Gregory regarded Martin as a *typus* for all other saints; Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 131. See below, p. 86 with note 173.

148 Several hagiographical sources critical to the development of Gregory's literary considerations of saints include typological thinking and terminology. For example, in their poetic renditions of Sulpicius Severus's books about Saint Martin, both Paulinus of Périgueux and Venantius Fortunatus characterized a field where the confessor converted a multitude as a *typus* for the church; Roberts, "Venantius Fortunatus's Life," 152-53. This is Fortunatus's only use of *typus* in his poetry. He used the word a second time in a prose exposition on the Lord's Prayer, referring to Adam as a type (*in typo*) for the spirit; Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 10.1.48.

149 Christ as maker of both testaments: e. g., *VP* 8 prologue.

150 *VP* 6 prologue.

151 *VP* 7 prologue.

152 *VP* 8 prologue.

impeccable lives Gregory's holy relatives and other saints lived provide examples that Christians should emulate so that they, like their models, can attain salvation. The virtues that Gregory selected for the saints in *VP* to reflect almost entirely involve bodily and worldly rejection. Self-denial, envisioned as a kind of martyrdom, was for our author a critical component in laboring towards the eschaton.[153]

Salvation history only ends with the Last Judgment. The saint about whom Gregory eventually became most familiar, with this knowledge including facts about both his time on earth and in heaven, was Saint Martin. Literature about the holy patron of Tours helped Gregory realize the supernal limits to which a saint's powers could extend. The earliest and most impactful of Martin's hagiographers was the confessor's contemporary, Sulpicius Severus. Sulpicius recorded how Martin had the ability to prophesy and that he conversed with saints and angels. In addition to depicting the ascetic bishop Martin while alive primarily using prayer and the sign of the cross to confer healings and thwart demonic foes, Sulpicius attributed to his hero the performance of several extraordinary, Christ-modeled miracles including curing a leper and resurrecting three individuals from the dead.[154] Sulpicius characterized the saint's power to be uniquely apostolic in his era: "Apostolic authority remained with Martin alone."[155] Some sixty years after Sulpicius, Paulinus of Périgueux composed a verse rendition of Sulpicius's books about Martin. Paulinus opted to focus upon Martin as a wonderworker specializing in healing.[156] By heavily elaborating on people's disabilities

153 Among authors influential to Gregory who lived and composed during the era when a generation of Gallic aristocrats first began to practice worldly renunciation were two individuals who rejected their enormous landed wealth, at least in an overtly selfish kind of way, Sulpicius Severus, Saint Martin's first hagiographer, and Paulinus of Nola, promoter of Saint Felix's cult. Prudentius, too, a latecomer to rejecting the world at age fifty-seven, declared all worldly pursuits were folly; Prudentius, *Praefatio* 1-35. On late ancient Christian approaches to wealth, including divestment: Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*.

154 Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini* 7.1-7, 8.1-3; *Dialogi* 2.4.4-9. On Saint Martin and Sulpicius Severus: Fontaine, *Sulpice Sévère*; Stancliffe, *Saint Martin*; Van Dam, *Leadership and Community*, 119-40.

155 Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini* 20.1.6-7. Sulpicius's Martin was disheveled in the manner of an ascetic, combative against fellow bishops and civil officials, and he issued apocalyptic prophecies; Van Dam, "Images of Saint Martin," 3-4. All of Martin's subsequent hagiographers toned down or omitted these qualities in the protagonist. For a theory that changes to images of Martin reflected alterations in the popular consciousness; Corbett, "Changing Perceptions." For an idea that Sulpicius's characterization of Martin as *vere apostolicus* was made in connection with the tradition of the apostles saving souls from hell: Moreira, "Plucking Sinners," 46-48.

156 Van Dam, "Images of Saint Martin," 5-8. Paulinus also retained Sulpicius's deep concern about the bald ambition of secular officials; Corbett, "Changing Perceptions," 243-46. According

and on the saint's cures, Paulinus presented the saint as a figure through whom God and Christ worked; Martin's actions proved God's involvement in the world.[157]

More than a century after Paulinus's work, Queen Radegund and Abbess Agnes at Poitiers petitioned Fortunatus to produce another versification of Sulpicius's books about Martin.[158] Fortunatus was an accomplished composer of praise pieces for aristocratic patrons, including bishops, so it comes as no surprise that he emphasized how Martin exhibited the virtues of an ideal bishop. Furthermore, the poet followed Paulinus in presenting Martin as healer.[159] Contrary to his predecessor, however, Fortunatus represented Martin working through God; the poet instilled in the saint an almost deific quality.[160] Fortunatus painted the saint while he resided on the earth already acting as a confidant of Christ with whom the Lord shared His divine secrets. By adding visual elements to Sulpicius's scenes of Bishop Martin conversing with saints, the poet augmented the confessor's image to the point of declaring that Martin while still alive was, by virtue of his visionary sensibility, already in paradise.[161] Fortunatus's living Martin held an ambiguous position existing simultaneously in both worlds. The poet wrote: "He still took his stand

to Van Dam, "Paulinus of Périgueux," 570, Paulinus personally initiated composition of the first three books of his *Vita Martini*, which versify Sulpicius's *Vita Martini*, perhaps in response to the confessor curing him of some misfortune. Thereafter, Bishop Perpetuus of Tours commissioned the poet (whose writings Gregory mistakenly ascribed to Paulinus of Nola, as did Fortunatus) to render poetic versions of Sulpicius's *Dialogi* about Martin (Books 4 and 5) and the bishop's own prose update of Martin's miracles (Book 6).

157 Pollmann, *Baptized Muse*, 203.

158 Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Martini, Praefatio ad Agnem et Radegundem* 27-30; Roberts, "Venantius Fortunatus's Life," 129. I have opted to include consideration of Fortunatus's *Vita Martini* here, for although Gregory may have only read it during his early episcopacy, it impacted his earliest writings. As many as seven anecdotes in *VSM* 1 derive from Gregory conversing with Fortunatus and probably from examining his poetry, too. A controversial issue over which the two writers collaborated, which resulted in a poem and a chapter in the *Historiae*, was the forced conversion of approximately 500 Jews at Clermont in 576; Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 5.5; *Historiae* 5.11. Gregory and Fortunatus may have swapped materials before producing their separate writings; Shanzer, "Gregory of Tours and Poetry," 310-111. It was Gregory's former mentor turned bishop of Clermont, Avitus, who presided over the affair. Gregory apparently encouraged Fortunatus to hurriedly write the poem to be read aloud and generate support for the prelate at Clermont: Brennan, "Conversion of the Jews"; Goffart, "Conversions of Avitus."

159 Van Dam, "Images of Saint Martin," 10.

160 Pollmann, *Baptized Muse*, 203-05.

161 Roberts, "Venantius Fortunatus's Life," 171-73.

on earth, though an intimate residing in heaven."[162] After his death and heavenly ascension, Fortunatus's Martin took on a cosmic aspect.[163] He was the equivalent of the sun's rays and the moon's course across the sky.[164] His countenance "is like the beautiful morning star in its brightness and splendor" and "though a man [he] shines brilliantly with the radiance of God…"[165] Christ-like in appearance, the heavenly Martin sits near Christ bearing the status of a senator.[166] In the conclusions for the final three books of his four-book epic, the poet requested for Martin to intercede on his behalf at Last Judgment.[167] As Michael Roberts has masterfully proposed, much of Fortunatus's celestial imagery mirrored paintings on the walls and apses of late ancient basilicas in order to confer an identical message of the saint's salvific powers.[168]

Therefore, Gregory had much to chew on when it came time for him to develop his own image of Saint Martin. Although he sincerely revered Sulpicius Severus's writings on Martin, and even thought it necessary for the faithful to believe the miracles Sulpicius had depicted Martin accomplishing, Gregory's version of the holy patron leaned decidedly closer to Paulinus and Fortunatus's impressions of a distinguished healer. While Gregory's Martin remained an "apostle to the Gauls," as tradition dictated it must, he portrayed the saint in *VSM* as a healer *par excellence*. Gregory did not, however, follow his friend Fortunatus by portraying the holy bishop simultaneously dwelling bodily on earth while transcendently residing spiritually in heaven.[169] As for Fortunatus's eschatological Martin, Gregory wholeheartedly adopted the poet's literary device of depicting

162 Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Martini* 2.437; trans. by Roberts, "Venantius Fortunatus's Life," 171. Corbett, "Changing Perceptions," 248, is critical of Fortunatus for presenting his audience with an icon instead of the actual person.

163 Roberts, "Venantius Fortunatus's Life," 173.

164 Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Martini* 4.590.

165 Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Martini* 4.591-592; trans. by Roberts, "Venantius Fortunatus's Life," 173.

166 Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Martini*, 3.522: *proximus et regi resides, Martine, senator*. See also *Vita Martini* 3.52: *caelesti in sede senator*; *Carmina* 10.6.96: *in aetheria sede senator habet*; Roberts, *Poems*, 662. For Martin as a heavenly senator: Van Dam, "Images of Saint Martin," 11.

167 Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Martini* 2.476-90, 3.525-28, 4.594-620; Roberts, "Venantius Fortunatus's Life," 173. Further on Fortunatus's heavenly Martin: Roberts, *Humblest Sparrow*, 231-43.

168 Roberts, "Venantius Fortunatus's Life," 171-87. On the shared aesthetic for late ancient poetry and mosaic: Roberts, *Jeweled Style*.

169 Gregory's decision to keep the living Martin on earth and heavenly Martin in heaven likely resulted from what he thought would best serve a broad audience. Like Paulinus of Périgueux Gregory intended for his writings, at least the *Miracula*, to be recited publicly, hence the oft

the saint as an intercessor to whom the author could appeal for protection at Last Judgment.[170] Gregory's *post mortem* Martin also bore a touch of the celestial aura Fortunatus heaped on the confessor. For example, the bishop wrote: "For among the other lights [available] to this world God grants in the blessed Martin an immense star, and through him this world's darkness becomes light."[171] But as indicated in this passage, Gregory regarded other saints as stars, too. Whatever extra light Gregory claimed to shine forth from Martin's star compared with other saints was assigned in a spirit of him promoting his own diocese's saint to the fullest. Elsewhere Gregory wrote: "For our faith believes that a single Lord works through the powers of many saints and that these saints are *not differentiated* by their powers, because the Lord makes them *equal in heaven* and similar on earth with his miracles."[172] Gregory's Martin was not theologically *sui generis*.[173] The author imagined that other saints, like Martin, could and would intercede on behalf of deserving souls at Last Judgment.[174] This belief that a multiplicity of saints would fulfill a soteriological and eschatological role on behalf of the faithful up until the final act of history perhaps was the best news Gregory drew forth from his years of ecclesiastical studies.

detectable sermon-style. Fortunatus's *Vita Martini*, however, was designed for an exclusive audience; Roberts, "Venantius Fortunatus's Life," 146.

170 *VSM* 2.60.

171 *VSM* 1.12; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 214.

172 VSM 4.12; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 290, with my italics.

173 *Contra* Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 131, who writes: "Gregory makes Martin the *typus* for all imitators of Christ, that is to say, all the saints." Heinzelmann, ibid., similarly claims that Gregory presented Martin "above the representatives of the traditional hagiographical hierarchy: the apostles, especially Peter, and the martyrs." In the same vein Heinzelmann, ibid, 85, proposes that Gregory intentionally located the tale about the death of Aredius of Limoges towards the end of *Historiae* 10 because the latter saint was "the typological fulfillment" of Saint Martin. Danuta Shanzer, "Review Article," 252, points out, however, that Gregory placed the obituary chapter for Aredius's death in 591 exactly where it chronologically belongs. For a more accurate appraisal of Gregory's egalitarian estimation of the saints, see Loseby, "Gregory of Tours," 468-70. Loseby interestingly likens the undifferentiated qualities of Gregory's saints – "for Gregory all the saints played as a team" – to the bishop's lack of recognition for episcopal hierarchical claims, particularly those that emanated from the bishops of Rome and Arles; ibid., 470.

174 E. g., *GM* 106. Gregory also prayed for Saints Julian and Andrew to intercede on his behalf with the Lord; *VSJ* 50; *MA* 38. Fortunatus likewise appealed to other saints besides Martin to intercede and help him gain admittance to paradise: e. g., Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 4.6 (Saint Exocius of Limoges). See also *In laudem sanctae Mariae* 359-60, which Ben Wheaton suggests was likely composed by Fortunatus.

Conclusion

Over the course of two decades climbing the ecclesiastical *cursus honorum*, Gregory developed skills associated with the cult of saints which helped him traverse the ever-present obstacles of ecclesiastical factionalism. In the same years he imbibed sacred literature, which affirmed the salutary roles all saints played through endless interventions in this defective world. By midyear of 573 Gregory fully appreciated how the same saints who had saved the lives of himself and family members during his childhood also possessed the ability to help save souls on Judgment Day. One senses that this is a message Gregory was desirous to proclaim even before he became the bishop of Tours. At the conclusion of his studies of ecclesiastical writings, the cleric was probably itching to impart lessons for how the saints could help secure for Christians a healthier here and a positive eternal hereafter. Equipped with a lifetime of cultic instruction by relatives and a sound late ancient ecclesiastical education, Gregory had all the makings to become a top-notch hagiographer. He soon would get the chance to honor his own patron saint in his own diocese. How excited he must have felt when divine providence entrusted him to promote one of the most respected saints with one of the most well-established cults in Gaul. But of course, Death too had a part to play in bringing Gregory to Tours. Furthermore, Death would have its own ideas about the literary genres in which that city's next bishop would compose.

3. Pastoring from the Pulpit and the Page

The person under consideration in this chapter already has "become Gregory"; he is an individual who imbibed and adopted the wisdom of familial elders along with that of the ecclesiastical fathers. As of the year 573 this individual was amply qualified to convey that wisdom to congregants and readers. Without doubt he desired to begin extolling the benefits saintly *virtutes* could afford people in this world and the next. But no matter how ready and able he was, nothing could have prepared him fully for Death's next foray. This chapter's opening narrative will address how Death brought Gregory to Tours where it tormented him and his new congregants throughout the first four years of his episcopacy. Next the chapter will address how these dire circumstances of the early episcopacy impacted Gregory's nascent writing program. Finally, it will examine the end product of Gregory's "making," a distinctive, saint-based pastoral agenda which the bishop tendered in order to help the faithful escape that eternal kind of death at Last Judgment.[1]

Death and the Bishop

In late 573 Death was anticipating a banner year forthcoming; a scuffle between Kings Sigibert and Guntram was about to intensify into one of the most violent episodes of Merovingian civil warfare ever.[2] But first things first; in early August, Death singled out Bishop Eufronius of Tours. News of Eufronius's demise likely caused mixed emotions for the Auvergnat deacon, Gregory. On the one hand, Eufronius was a relation with whom he probably had become increasingly acquainted since the pilgrimage to Martin's basilica in 563, and so Gregory grieved. On the other hand, Gregory had reason to regard Tours as every bit and more the family see that Langres and Lyons had been, and so he likely aspired to take the city's episcopal seat.[3] As Raymond Van Dam has elaborated, there was never a guarantee Gregory would become the bishop of Tours.[4] But presumably he

1 On events in Gaul during Gregory's episcopacy: Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 88-101; Pietri, *La ville de Tours*, 265-334.

2 Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 89.

3 For Gregory's famous remark that all but five of his episcopal predecessors were relatives: *Historiae* 5.49 and see above, p. 27 n. 13.

4 Van Dam, *Saints*, 63-68.

had taken steps to improve his chances of securing the see, particularly by making himself occasionally visible at King Sigibert's court after the latter took control of Tours in 568.[5] Thanks to Fortuntus's poem on Gregory's episcopal *adventus*, we know that Sigibert and Queen Brunhild appointed him to become bishop of Tours and that the consecration ceremony happened uncanonically at the king's capital, Metz, instead of at Tours.[6] While Gregory did not share these details in his writings, he did inform readers that the cathedra at Tours remained vacant for only nineteen days following Eufronius's demise.[7] The consecration, therefore, happened in late August 573. Oddly it took Gregory two full months before he entered his new city. Perhaps a suspicion that a hostile faction among the clergy was already in play contributed to this delay. After the recent debacles at Langres and Lyons following his two great-uncles' deaths, Gregory had every right to be wary.[8] Therefore, it makes sense that he took recourse with that on which he had become accustomed to rely during trying moments: the *alumnus* sought the aid of his most intimate saint. Immediately following the consecration, Gregory traveled back to the Auvergne and joined in the August pilgrimage to Brioude. He celebrated the martyr's festival at Saint Julian's basilica where he piously retrieved some relics, threads from a shroud draped over the tomb.[9] Next he proceeded to the Touraine and cautiously situated himself at a villa on the outskirts of Tours.[10]

5 Sigibert ruled over the Auvergne as of 561 and acquired Tours along with Poitiers following King Charibert's demise in late 567.

6 Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 5.3. On Gregory becoming bishop: Van Dam, *Saints*, 62-64; Wood, *Gregory of Tours*, 8-11; Heinzelmann, G*regory of Tours*, 38-40. Wood suggests Gregory did not record his own consecration in the *Historiae* because it was uncanonical; Wood, *Gregory of Tours*, 11; idem, "Individuality," 43. Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 39, it appears, thinks Gregory left out mention of the ceremony in keeping with the author's tendency to downplay biographical information and thereby elevate the *Historiae*'s didactic quality. It was Bishop Aegidius of Reims, a towering partisan for Sigibert's regime, who presided over the ritual. Gregory may have omitted, or removed, reference to his consecration to distance himself from Aegidius, who in the 580s had orchestrated an Austrasian-Neustrian alliance with King Chilperic and then slowly fell from grace at the Austrasian court following a failed effort to introduce a pretender to replace Guntram of Burgundy; Goffart, "Byzantine Policy"; Wood, "Secret Histories," 267-68. In 590 Sigibert's successor, Childebert II, put the bishop of Reims on trial. Aegidius was found guilty of treason, defrocked, and exiled; *Historiae* 10.19. On Aegidius and Gregory: Van Dam, *Saints*, 73-76; Wood, *Gregory of Tours*, 17-18.

7 *Historiae* 10.31.

8 A priest under Bishop Eufronius named Riculf apparently expected to succeed his superior at Tours: *Historiae* 5.49. On Gregory's tenuous position prior to entering Tours: Van Dam, *Saints*, 63-65.

9 *VSJ* 34.

10 *VSM* 2.1.

Death had a habit of threatening Gregory with near fatal diseases at poignant junctures of his life.[11] This context apparently contributed to Gregory as writer eventually bookending the start and close of his books chronicling Saint Martin's miracles with tales of the confessor rescuing him from a deadly disease or some worrisome circumstance.[12] While at the villa Gregory suddenly incurred a case of dysentery with an accompanying fever that was so harsh the bishop expected he was going to die. He confessed: "I began to suffer so badly that I completely gave up any hope of living, because Death was imminent."[13] About this nearly fatal episode, no details were spared. Gregory regularly vomited out his food before it could digest; he lost the desire to eat; and he endured piercing pains in his stomach and intestines. After the ministrations of a physician named Armentarius (yet another maternal relation?) failed him, he became despondent and pondered his funeral. As an author recalling the situation, Gregory again chose to present Death as a sentient agent bent on instigating his demise: "I despaired about myself, for Death had delivered me up for destruction."[14] Eventually Gregory caused Armentarius to send a deacon to Tours to fetch dust from Saint Martin's tomb. When the trio mixed said dust with water, the moribund figure consumed the potion and immediately the pain disappeared. By day's end Gregory was fully healed.

As mentioned at the start of this chapter, the Gregory who entered Tours as the new bishop was "fully baked"; he was totally prepared to employ a variety of methods to prove to the clergy and congregation that he shared with them a reliance on Saint Martin. For example, publicizing how the holy patron had just healed him of dysentery signaled Gregory's desire to find common cause with the city's residents. It also was intended to suggest how Saint Martin was willing to extend his favor to the new prelate. The day after this healing, Gregory attended a mass where many in attendance laughed aloud at an officiating priest when he stumbled over several words during the liturgy. The new prelate then reprimanded the crowd, and later that night, he claimed, a man (sc. Martin) appeared to him in a dream to say: "There must never be any disagreement about the mysteries of God."[15] By recounting this dream-vision, probably at the next church service over

11 Compare Van Dam, *Saints*, 91, for Gregory's habit of incurring illnesses at times of transition.

12 Gregory only began this practice in his second book on Martin's *virtutes*: *VSM* 2.1, 60; *VSM* 3.1, 60; *VSM* 4.1.

13 *VSM* 2.1; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 228, with my capitalization of "Death." For a recent consideration of this episode: Kitchen, "Gregory of Tours," 375-76, 393-94.

14 *VSM* 2.1; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 229; again, my capitalization.

15 *VSM* 2.1; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 229.

which he officiated, Gregory attempted to establish how divine sanction indicated Martin was prepared to back his authority as leader of the community's ecclesia.

To further establish his credentials as leader of Tours' Christian faithful, Gregory supplemented Martin's timely miraculous healing and impromptu dream appearance with several other actions, some obviously premeditated. Presumably concurrent with his entry to the city or shortly thereafter, the prelate gathered alongside the city's dignitaries to hear a public delivery of Fortunatus's *Ad cives Turonicam*, a poem which welcomed Gregory and declared how the holy patron of the bishop's paternal homeland, Julian, vouched for the merits of his *alumnus*, Gregory, to Tours' holy patron, Martin.[16] It was in this same poem that Fortunatus unabashedly acknowledged Sigibert and Brunhild's decisive role in Gregory's episcopal promotion.[17] That he did so openly indicates how poet and dedicatee anticipated the assembled luminaries to be impressed with the new prelate's royal backing. This poem presumably achieved the desired effect, for Gregory soon requested a second task of Fortunatus that would serve a similar purpose of impressing the community's elite literary connoisseurs, to write a metrical composition of Sulpicius Severus's works about Saint Martin.[18] The poet undertook this assignment with zeal, completing it in a mere three years (probably 576), thereby bolstering the reputations of both bishops of Tours, Gregory and Martin.[19]

Another adept advocate who arrived at Tours to help strengthen the new bishop's approval was Armentaria. During a two or three month stay at the city Gregory's mother reportedly prayed regularly to Saint Martin.[20] Furthermore, while at Tours she avowed how Martin healed her of a

16 Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 5.3. Michael Roberts, "Venantius Fortunatus and Gregory," 37-38, posits that Queen Radegund requested composition of the *adventus* poem to gain the new bishop's support for her convent at Poitiers.

17 Roberts, "Venantius Fortunatus and Gregory," 37, points out there is no evidence Fortunatus met Gregory before 573. Alternatively, Gregory may have met the poet as early as 566, at the wedding of Sigibert and Brunhild; George, *Venantius Fortunatus*, 4-5.

18 Venantius Fortunatus, *Epistula ad Gregorium* 1.

19 On Fortunatus's lasting support for his patron Gregory: Brennan, "Career of Venantius," 70-77; Roberts, "Venantius Fortunatus and Gregory."

20 Armentaria may have been already well acquainted with Saint Martin. She could have added the confessor to the list of saints to whom she prayed when Eufronius became bishop at Tours. Additionally, Martin was credited with having long ago healed Armentaria's uncle Nicetius after the latter's mother, Artemia, invoked his name; *VP* 8.2. For a church of Saint Martin at Chalon, which Artemia, Nicetius, and Armentaria might have frequented to revere the saint: Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 31, n. 21.

recurring leg pain that had plagued her since she had given birth thirty-four years earlier.[21] Raymond Van Dam has pointed out how this healing apparently occurred near the time of Saint Martin's 11 November festival.[22] If so, then Armentaria may have publicly announced, and perhaps even experienced, her miraculous recovery in front of a crowd of believers gathered at the basilica in hopeful expectation of witnessing the confessor's *virtutes*.[23]

Another component of Gregory's campaign to associate himself with Saint Martin that involved his mother was making the fateful decision to update the written record for Saint Martin's miracles. It is intriguing that Gregory credited Armentaria with forcing his decision to write. The author explained in *VSM* 1's prologue that he experienced a recurring dream wherein he watched as people suffering from various afflictions were receiving cures in Martin's basilica. Armentaria appeared alongside her son in the dream and asked why he was hesitating to record the miracles, to which he responded that he did not sufficiently know the details, and at any rate he was inadequately educated to accomplish the task. Dream-Armentaria reminded him that simple speech was appropriate since common people could comprehend it. Shen then demanded: "Therefore do not hesitate and do not stop recording these events, because you would commit a crime if you were silent about them."[24] Here Gregory employed two literary devices to justify taking up the pen. First, he expressed humility by disparaging his own writing ability.[25] Second, he characterized the decision to write as the result of a divine command. Gregory portrayed himself requiring the counsel of his spiritually advanced mother in order to overcome a personal anxiety stemming from perceived literary shortcomings and thereby to accept that he must fulfill the divine mandate. It cannot be known whether Gregory actually experienced said series of dreams involving Armentaria as he claimed, or whether he simply embraced the role of impish litterateur

21 *VSM* 3.10.

22 Van Dam, *Saints*, 264 n. 77.

23 In addition to deftly touting Martin's curative powers, it is possible that Armentaria also lent whatever social clout she possessed by virtue of her close relationship with Martin's last episcopal representative. Perhaps the aristocratic laywoman canvassed amongst Tours' citizenry, or with Eufronius's former clerical subordinates, to assuage any concerns they might have had about her son's capabilities. Gregory would not have shown Armentaria performing such worldly activities in his writings, which could distract from the pious image of his mother he intended to convey; Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 21-25.

24 *VSM* 1 prologue; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 200.

25 On Gregory's frequent employment of the humility topos throughout his writings: e. g., Breukelaar, *Historiography*, 319-20; Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces,* 124-41.

and decided to playfully color his mother muse when he actually started writing. If the former, he could have acknowledged the dreams before a crowd at a public occasion, perhaps one at which he vowed to update the saint's miracles.[26] A critical feature about the initiation of Gregory's writing program is that it involved a vow.[27] The most opportune moment for him to tender this vow was that same 11 November festival in 573, the first celebration of Martin's *virtutes* over which he presided as bishop. Perhaps Gregory publicly called upon God's witness that he experienced the dreams before the assemblage at Martin's church, just as he later recounted. He may have followed up this supernaturally endowed justification to compose with a solemn promise that he would dutifully register the acts of his fellow worshippers' holy patron lest the miracles Martin performed during his predecessors' tenures be forgotten.[28]

In spring of 574 the Auvergnat newcomer and allies were still building the Julian to Martin nexus, as evidenced by several miracles involving the relics Gregory had retrieved from Saint Julian's tomb shortly after his consecration. First, while Gregory was transferring a reliquary containing Julian's relics into Martin's basilica, a *vir fidelis* claimed that a massive light appeared in the sky, descended, and entered the church.[29] The bishop interpreted this fiery phenomenon as proof of Julian's *praesentia* at Tours. The next day monks and clerics processed with the reliquary from Martin's basilica to an extramural church which had been built and dedicated to Julian prior to Gregory's arrival. A demoniac in attendance at the celebration obligingly voiced the new bishop's desired message: "Martin, why have you allied yourself with Julian? Why do you summon him to this region?"[30] The theatrics at this relics installation culminated while Gregory was overseeing a mass, when the same possessed man spewed blood and credited his demon's expulsion to the martyr. Since the monks who built this church already were devotees of Saint Julian, they likely counted among the Auvergnian's most avid early

26 Assertions of a visionary experience: de Nie, *Views*, 213-16; Wood, *Gregory of Tours*, 36; Van Dam, *Saints*, 142; Moreira, *Dreams, Visions*, 85-86; Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 20-21. Alternatively, Danuta Shanzer, "So Many Saints," 28, argues Gregory simply employed a literary device through which Armentaria took on "the role of literature-inciting Muse."

27 Gregory claimed to complete *VSM* 2 eight years after vowing to write about Martin's miracles; *VSM* 2.60.

28 Fortunatus completed his metrical *Vita Martini* in 576. The prologue to that book, in fact a dedicatory letter to Gregory, refers to the bishop of Tours also writing about Saint Martin; Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Martini* prologue.

29 *VSJ* 34.

30 *VSJ* 35; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 186.

supporters, eager to convince others to emulate Martin's alliance with Julian by cooperating with the new bishop.[31]

No sooner did Gregory and Armentaria have cause to celebrate a promising start to the Tours community's acceptance of their new leader, Death struck the family a cruel blow. The son of the deceased Sylvester of Langres, still bristling two years after what he suspected had been his father's murder at the Deacon Peter's hands, surprised the latter in the streets (presumably at Langres) and ran him through with a spear. Also implicated in Peter's death was Lampadius; the former deacon, whose dismissal Peter had instigated, apparently egged on Sylvester's son to take vengeance. One reads that Peter's corpse was brought to Dijon and laid to rest next to the tomb of Saint Gregory of Langres. What one does not read is that it was Armentaria who probably oversaw her elder son's sorrowful burial alongside her blessed grandfather.[32] Peter's murderer eventually became an outlaw and was deprived of his wealth and forced to roam about Gaul. Death provided what Gregory imagined to be a fitting conclusion to the whole affair when the culprit killed another man, thereby igniting a feud in which he too fell to a sword.[33]

Gregory likely had little time in 574 to dwell on Death's callous treatment of his brother, much less to attend a distant funeral. For in addition to still adjusting himself in the new locale, he now faced the prospect of tending to a war escalating around his diocese. In the previous year, not a month after Gregory's consecration, King Guntram had convened the bishops of his realm at Paris, and the assembled prelates apparently requested that he and Sigibert keep the peace.[34] Both rulers ignored this advice, however, and

31 Van Dam, *Saints*, 65-66, has dated the miracles to April 574 and suggests they denoted the bishop's full acceptance into the community. Another ceremony datable to Gregory's first year as bishop and intended in part to emphasize a connection between the bishop and his Auvergnat saints with Martin and the Tourangeaux was the dedication of the new prelate's oratory. At this event a ball of fire reportedly flashed, frightening the assemblage of clerics and distinguished citizens. The flash happened just as Gregory brought the relics of Saints Martin, Julian of Brioude, Illidius of Clermont, and Saturninus of Toulouse into the room. Gregory proposed to the crowd that the fireball was of the same variety as one that once floated over Martin's head while he officiated as bishop; *GC* 20; *VP* 2.3; Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogi* 2.2.1-2.

32 Gregory entirely omitted any part Armentaria would have played in this prolonged family tragedy that began with Sylvester's demise; Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 24.

33 *Historiae* 5.5.

34 Guntram and Sigibert's quarrel began because the latter created a bishopric at Châteaudun, which belonged to Sigibert's realm but rested in the diocese of Chartres, which was in Guntram's kingdom. Prelates attending the Council of Paris (573) deposed Sigibert's appointee. They also sent letters of reproach to Bishop Aegidius of Reims and King Sigibert; de Clercq, ed., *CCSL*

soon after violence ensued.[35] Guntram allied with Chilperic, and the latter sent his son Theudebert to march through Sigibert's lands. Theudebert's army scorched the earth as it advanced, achieving the desired effect; the prince secured control of both Tours and Poitiers from Sigibert's control before continuing southward into the Limousin.[36] Gregory's words in the *Historiae* bespeak a sense of dread that must have overwhelmed the new prelate when he witnessed Death's handiwork as wrought through Theudebert: "He burned the churches, stole their holy vessels, killed the clergy, emptied the monasteries of monks, raped the nuns in their convents and caused devastation everywhere. There was even more weeping in the churches at this period than there had been at the time of Diocletian's persecution."[37] Next King Sigibert countered his brother's aggression by enlisting mercenaries from across the Rhine to bolster his usual military force. Upon learning this Chilperic convinced Guntram to agree they would not turn their troops against one another. Sigibert responded by simply threatening to attack Guntram, who forthwith reneged on his arrangement with Chilperic. Sigibert's army then marched through Paris, which Chilperic apparently had begun to treat as if it were his new capital, and confronted Chilperic's army near Chartres. Faced with a conflict he could not hope to win, the latter sued for peace. Although Death was denied the carnage of a pitched battle outside of Chartres, the menace rejoiced when Sigibert's troops proceeded to despoil a wide swath of territory around Paris. For many days the king's commands for his soldiers to stand down went unheeded by the unruly warriors from beyond the Rhine, until finally the ruler rode out among them and convinced the brutes to end their orgy of desolation.[38]

Death provided no respite during the ensuing campaign season of 575. Chilperic renewed the truce with Guntram and sent soldiers to pillage deep into Sigibert's territory, culminating the rampage with a sack of Reims. In response, Sigibert again summoned the boisterous trans-Rhenan troops to augment his already formidable forces. This army marched into Paris.

148A, 212-17. The deposition was enforced only after Sigibert's death; *Historiae* 7.16. On Gregory's inability to attend the council: Van Dam, *Saints*, 65.

35 *Historiae* 4.46.

36 In a rather defensive vein Gregory commented that all of the Touraine would have burned, instead of just a part, had not the Tourangeaux surrendered swiftly. In contrast, at Poitiers Theudebert's army faced a ducal army in a pitched battle and beat it, after which the prince slew many Poitevins; *Historiae* 4.47.

37 *Historiae* 4.47; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 244.

38 *Historiae* 4.49, and see *VSM* 2.5-7. For continuance of the "Roman" practice of recruiting mercenaries from among barbarian *gentes*: Bachrach, "Merovingian Mercenaries."

Furthermore, Sigibert sent two dukes to cajole the somewhat reluctant fighting-aged men of Tours and Châteaudun to form levies and march versus Chilperic's son, Theudebert. The latter armies faced off against Prince Theudebert, who died in battle. Guntram again made a hasty peace with Sigibert, and upon hearing this Chilperic immediately tucked his family into a fortress at Tournai.[39] Sigibert asserted control over the cities south of Paris and then advanced to Chilperic's city, Rouen. The aggressor felt emboldened by overtures from many magnates now eager to guarantee allegiance and accept him as overlord. Virtually assured a triumph over the younger half-brother, Sigibert prepared to march on Tournai. In preparation for the coup de grâce, the king ventured to the villa of Vitry where new troops had gathered to acknowledge his rule. No sooner had the soldiers finished ceremonially raising Sigibert on a shield, two assassins struck down the exultant monarch.[40] Death assuredly grinned a sly grin.[41]

A consequence of Death's unanticipated ruthless action against Sigibert in late 575 was that Gregory's diocese underwent two more years of brutal assault and severe deprivation. Upon Sigibert's demise Tours should have fallen to the king's only son, the five-year old Childebert II. That helpless youth was at Paris with his mother when the king fell, but a duke spirited the boy away even without Queen Brunhild's knowledge – "snatching him from certain death," Gregory rightly remarked.[42] With the lad secure in the Austrasian heartland, magnates there oversaw King Childebert's coronation on Christmas day 575 and began the process anew of amassing power for their sub-kingdom. Deprived of his victim, Chilperic upon entering Paris had to settle on capturing Brunhild, whom he banished to Rouen. He then turned his attention to gathering cities previously held by his dead brother, Tours among them.

The first of Chilperic's armies to arrive in the Touraine at the turn of 576 was that of Duke Roccolen who led a levy of troops from Le Mans.[43] One objective Roccolen was tasked to accomplish at Tours was to capture Sigibert's duke, Guntram Boso, whom Chilperic held responsible for his son Theudebert's demise. The duke had lodged himself into Saint Martin's basilica and was claiming sanctuary. Presumably Chilperic also ordered Roccolen to initiate the process of securing full control over the Touraine on behalf of its new

39 *Historiae* 4.50.

40 *Historiae* 4.51.

41 For Gregory's assessment of why Sigibert fell so suddenly and what became of the king's soul, see below, pp. 248-55, 261-62.

42 *Historiae* 5.1; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 254.

43 *Historiae* 5.1.

royal overlord.[44] Roccolen initially set up camp along the Loire on the bank opposite the city. The levied men from Le Mans then pillaged fields in the area. Unfortunately for their leader, Roccolen incurred a case of jaundice that swiftly worsened. While his soldiers ravaged as they consolidated territory, the flagging duke adopted a pious pose and entered Tours to join in celebrations during Epiphany. But because Saint Martin did not provide him relief from the ailment, and, furthermore, because Roccolen failed to extract Guntram Boso from the saint's basilica, the duke departed the devastated region.[45]

No sooner had the Tourangeaux begun picking up the pieces, the lull quickly dissipated. Within months another army arrived in the Touraine, this one led by Prince Merovech. Chilperic had instructed this son to go to Poitiers, but the latter chose this moment to disregard his father and make a bid to seize a portion of Sigibert's realm for himself.[46] Merovech's force occupied Tours. The prince celebrated Easter in the city while his soldiers devastated the region until finally they departed northwards.[47] Merovech next proceeded to Rouen where the city's bishop, Praetextatus, promptly married him to Sigibert's widow, Brunhild, who apparently was momentarily desperate enough to join with the rebel prince in hopes of regaining her dead husband's realm.[48] When Chilperic approached the city, the two scampered into a church and claimed sanctuary. The king finally swore an oath in order to convince his treacherous son he would not separate him from his bride. Merovech then exited the church and joined his father on a campaign to recover Soissons.[49] Outside of that city, Chilperic gained a total victory over a massive Austrasian army, slaughtering many soldiers in the process.[50] Death assuredly basked in the gore of 576.

In the same year yet another army marched across the Touraine. Chilperic ordered his son Clovis to Tours, where he gathered a levy of men who marched through the Touraine and into Anjou before heading southwards.[51]

44 Halsall, "Preface to Book V," 309.

45 *Historiae* 5.4.

46 The danger posed by Chilperic's latest wife, Fredegund, probably precipitated Merovech's action. As a son of Chilperic by a former wife, Merovech had reason to fear that Fredegund would attempt to remove him to the benefit of her own children sired by the king; Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 90.

47 *Historiae* 5.2.

48 Halsall, "Preface to Book V," 310, writes that taking Tours was "the first move" in Merovech's effort to grab however much he could of the remains of Sigibert's kingdom.

49 Gregory provided no details for how Brunhild managed to depart Rouen and rejoin her son, Childebert II, at the Austrasian court, but that is where the queen next appears in 577; *Historiae* 5.14.

50 *Historiae* 5.3.

51 *Historiae* 5.13.

The Neustrian king next surprisingly ordered Merovech to be tonsured, ordained a priest, and sent to Le Mans. Soon after this, Guntram Boso sent a sub-deacon from Tours to invite Merovech to join him in sanctuary at Saint Martin's at Tours. Merovech arrived at the basilica while Gregory was celebrating mass with Bishop Ragnemod of Paris. The prince demanded that he be permitted to participate in the ceremony, and he even threatened to kill others if Gregory did not submit. Gregory subsequently deduced that the destruction his diocese later suffered resulted from him sinfully allowing Merovech to take communion from his own hands on that occasion. Yet another volatile force that lit upon Tours at this time came in the person of a new count, Leudast, who later would prove himself one of Bishop Gregory's principal banes.[52] One matter that Chilperic expected Leudast to expedite was the removal of the rebellious prince from sanctuary. Merovech, however, enjoyed a sizeable force of at least 500 men who camped near the church, which made him impervious to Leudast's grasp. Gregory must have found it a relief when Merovech, after months of treating Saint Martin's basilica as a living-quarters, finally abandoned the church and the town. The prince took with him the church's other troublesome guest, Guntram Boso, and also his band of soldiers.[53] For a year King Chilperic had sent dispatches demanding the removal from sanctuary of the disloyal prince and former duke, all in vain. Then, in 576/577 King Chilperic brought the might of his ire upon the Touraine by sending yet another army. Gregory wrote: "He sacked the whole neighborhood, setting fire to it and ravaging it, and not sparing even the things which belonged to Saint Martin. He seized whatever he could lay his hands on…"[54]

52 Leudast had been count of Tours earlier under King Charibert, but he lost the post in 568 when Sigibert gained the city. Seven years later Bishop Gregory, unable to ignore the will of his new royal lord, warily admitted Leudast again as the city's count; *Historiae* 5.48.

53 In 577 Merovech marched to the Austrasian realm probably expecting to join his wife Brunhild. But, according to Gregory, the prince was rebuffed *a Austrasiis*; *Historiae* 5.14. By only generally indicating how unnamed persons fended off the prince, Gregory avoided recording how Brunhild, now secure at court, rejected her own husband, who was no longer of any political value; Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 147. Merovech became especially irrelevant for Brunhild after King Guntram adopted her son Childebert; Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity*, 40. Politically isolated and reduced to hiding, Merovech eventually was trapped at a villa near Thérouanne, which was under Chilperic's control. The king was reportedly closing in on the prince when the latter ordered one of his servants to kill him. Among those whom Gregory identified as suspects thought to have arranged the rebel's capture were Queen Fredegund, Bishop Aegidius of Reims, and Guntram Boso; *Historiae* 5.18; *PLRE* 3B: 885-86, s. v., "Merovechus 1." For 578 as the year for Merovech's suicide: Marius of Avenches, *Chronica* s. a. 578.

54 *Historiae* 5.14; trans. by Thorpe, *Gregory*, 272.

Therefore, during the first four years of Gregory's episcopacy, Death made itself the bishop's constant companion, a sinister antagonist, and even an obsession. Death played a decisive role in bringing Gregory to Tours, and it was a contributing factor for him writing the *VSM*. After all, it was Death's removal of Eufronius that opened the episcopal vacancy which Sigibert and Brunhild filled with Gregory. Once seated upon the cathedra Gregory determined to update the written record for Saint Martin's miracles as part of a campaign to ingratiate himself with the inhabitants of his new diocese. But can Death have been responsible for even more? Did Death precipitate Gregory beginning to compose not just the *Miracula*, but also the *Historiae*?

Death and the Historian?

Within weeks of Bishop Eufronius's decease, Gregory promised to put Saint Martin's miracles into writing. Composition of *VSM* 1 apparently marks the bishop's entrée as a hagiographer. Bruno Krusch's assertion more than a century ago that all of Gregory's surviving writings postdate the start of his episcopacy has yet to be disproved.[55] What stands out about the decision to write *VSM* is the vow Gregory took assuring he would fulfill the task. This commitment transformed the writing effort into an exercise tantamount to a pilgrimage.[56] So sacred did the author regard the endeavor, he hoped it would contribute to a remission of his sins.[57] In adopting this personal, penitent approach to composing *VSM*, Gregory was following in the footsteps of several of his favorite writers. For example, Prudentius had remarked how he hoped writing poems in service to the Christian faith would help him break the chains of the body and garner salvation.[58] Fortunatus developed a travel motif for his *Vita Martini* by representing each book as the leg of a sea voyage, for which the final destination, following the saint's intercession, would be the poet's redemption.[59] Like Gregory, Fortunatus had once benefited from Saint Martin's healing *virtus* (while the poet was living in Italy) and it may be that a desire to give thanks at Martin's tomb was partly

55 Krusch, ed., *MGH*, SRM 1.2, 1-12.

56 Van Dam, *Saints*, 145-46. For comparison of a tour of Martin's basilica to a pilgrimage: Van Dam, *Leadership and Community*, 240-55.

57 *VSM* 1.40.

58 Prudentius, *Praefatio* 43-45. Pollmann, *Baptized Muse*, 52, writes: "[Prudentius] intended poetry to be his sacrificial offering in this endeavor."

59 Roberts, "Venantius Fortunatus's Life," 180.

responsible for bringing him to Gaul.[60] As with his predecessors' motives, there is no reason to doubt that Gregory was anything but sincere about the penitential and soteriological dimensions for his initial writing project.

Gregory credited himself with completing the vow he had taken in the early weeks of his episcopacy with publication of *VSM* 2 in late 581.[61] It is debatable whether he circulated *VSM* 1 separately in an earlier year, or whether he released it to the public alongside the second book. The earliest he could have distributed *VSM* 1 is 576, in which year Fortunatus also finished his versified *Vita Martini*.[62] One imagines that Gregory would have wished to deliver the book to Tours' populace at the earliest opportunity as further testimony to his commitment to the city's patron.[63] Perhaps unexpected obligations brought on by the tumults of successive marauding armies forced him to reevaluate the need to satisfy that early priority. One compelling reason to suspect Gregory eventually decided to publish *VSM* 1 and 2 simultaneously is so that he could finish the avowed task with a work consisting of an even 100 chapters.[64] Gregory apparently thought there was something divinely appropriate about producing texts with multiples of tens, either chapters or books; indeed, doing so seems to have become one of his literary obsessions.[65] Regardless of when between 576 and 581 he first offered *VSM* 1 to its awaiting local audience, it is worth noting that

60 Van Dam, *Saints*, 126-27. For Fortunatus coming to Gaul in search of social opportunities at the Frankish courts: Brennan, "Career of Venantius."

61 Completed vow: *VSM* 2.60. For the probable date of *VSM* 2's completion in 581 prior to November: Shaw, "Chronology," 109-10. Publication in this age may be taken to mean the availing of a work for others to copy or distribute: ibid., 106-07 n. 13.

62 Shaw, ibid., 108-09, has solved a chronological conundrum which rested in the seemingly contrary facts that Fortunatus's *Vita Martini* mentions Gregory's *VSM* while Gregory at *VSM* 1 noted completion of Fortunatus's four-book work. Shaw's solution confirms that *VSM* 1 postdates the poet's *Vita Martini* (finished in 576).

63 See, e. g., Heinzelmann, "Une source de base," 244. Supportive of *VSM* 1's early circulation is the fact that Gregory put a story about a miracle that happened before his episcopacy in *VSM* 2, even though *VSM* 1 preserved stories prior to him becoming bishop and *VSM* 2 was for stories after. Gregory admitted he forgot to include the tale in *VSM* 1. Had the writer held back publication of the first book, he could have slipped the tale into *VSM* 1 and emended the chapter numbers as necessary. Plugging individual chapters into this work or another seems to have been the author's usual practice for his unfinished works, which he composed simultaneously.

64 *VSM* 1 has forty chapters while *VSM* 2 has sixty. See Shaw, "Chronology," 109.

65 *VSM* 3: sixty chapters (Gregory's only other completed book besides *VSM* 1 and 2); twenty *vitae* in *VP*; a list of twenty total books at *Historiae* 10.31, this consisting of ten books of *Historiae*, seven of *Miracula*, plus the *VP*, *PT* and *CSR*. To derive the count of twenty books Gregory had to exclude two books paraphrasing earlier *vitae*, *MA* and *PSD*. For a theory that Gregory's scheme for listing twenty books was in imitation of Eusebius of Caesarea: Heinzelmann, "Works of Gregory," 284-85. For more on multiples of ten in Gregory's writings, see below, pp. 285-87.

both *VSM* 1 and 2 circulated while King Chilperic ruled over Tours. We will have reason to revisit this point momentarily.[66]

Gregory may have found it frustrating that it took him eight years to complete his oath to Saint Martin, for he seems to have thought it important to expedite one's vows. One recalls from chapter 2, for example, that in 563 when a fever reasserted itself at an almost fatal level while Gregory was traveling on pilgrimage to Tours, rather than return home as per his distraught companions' suggestion, he instead pressed on in order to complete a vow. As author he recalled how he had begged his friends to permit him to continue the avowed journey "for the sake of the Judgment Day that all the guilty must fear."[67] This wording indicates the eschatological implications Gregory associated with completion of pilgrimages and vows. Once an oath was given to a saint, its fulfillment became mandatory.[68] Failure to keep such a vow, he thought, invited a saint's just retribution, and, as will be addressed in chapters 4 and 5, it sometimes carried eternal consequences.[69]

Despite a possibility that Gregory bore some anxiety over completing the vow to write down Saint Martin's miracles, he undoubtedly regarded this "pilgrimage" as a labor of love.[70] Indeed, given the atmosphere of recurring violence which beset the Touraine during his early episcopacy, occasionally penning tales about Martin's merciful ministrations may have afforded the beleaguered bishop needed moments of solace and renewed hopefulness. While Gregory went about touting Martin's *virtutes* as a benefit available not only to the people of Tours but for Christians throughout the entire of Gaul and beyond, a concomitant desire welled up inside him to declare to the faithful how the holy powers of many more saints also were near at hand. Consequently, at a date that scholars will never be able to determine

66 For probable completion of *VSM* 3 in 587; Shaw, "Chronology," 110; Van Dam, *Saints*, 281 with n. 92.

67 *VSM* 1.32; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 224.

68 For a mute individual from Spain who finished a vow to travel to Martin's basilica even though the saint had already produced a cure prior to him arriving by ship at Bordeaux: *VSM* 4.40.

69 This unbending quality regarding Gregory's expectation for the faithful to keep their vows corresponds with the bishop's similarly unyielding position that Christians must in no way perform work on Sundays, even if the loss of one's livestock or crops hung in the balance. Gregory's preaching against committing infractions on holy days complements much late ancient canon legislation: Van Dam, *Leadership and Community*, 285-87; Wood, "Early Merovingian Devotion," 64-66.

70 Kitchen, "Gregory of Tours," 390. Alternatively, for the idea that Gregory, aware of Perpetuus of Tours' earlier effort to record Martin's miracles, wrote *VSM* out of an "overwhelming sense of obligation" to do likewise; Brennan, "'Being Martin,'" 126. Apparently, this obligation did not phase the twelve bishops who held the episcopal seat at Tours between Perpetuus and Gregory.

precisely, the writer broadened his hagiographical scope by composing miracle stories performed by saints other than Martin.[71] Danuta Shanzer provides a logical scenario for Gregory's extension of his hagiographical habit. Alongside the *VSM*, he started to write the *VSJ*, a work which like the former chronicled the escapades of one entombed saint whose miracles happened primarily at a single shine.[72] He next shed the literary shackles of focusing on a single shrine per book by composing tales of tomb miracles (and more) gathered from a variety of locales. Eventually he loosely divided this material into books about martyrs and confessors.[73] Finally he moved beyond stories about deceased saints and tried his hand at composing small *vitae*.[74] If the very strong likelihood that Gregory wrote all of the *Miracula* while he was a bishop is indeed so, then one may trace the launch of his entire hagiographical enterprise back to the decisive role Death played in bringing the cleric to Tours where he straightaway set about rectifying decades of neglect by properly updating the record on Martin's miracles.[75]

71 Gregory composed the various books of the *Miracula* simultaneously and continuously: Shanzer, "So Many Saints," 24; Shaw, "Chronology," 105-07.

72 Shanzer, "So Many Saints," 24. Whereas Gregory stuck close to his literary predecessors Paulinus of Périgueux and Fortunatus in representing Saint Martin first and foremost as a healer, with Saint Julian the writer branched out by opting to paint the martyr as a just punisher of individuals who offended sacred space and customs. See Shanzer, ibid., 27-37, who also suggests Gregory intended Julian as a prankster.

73 Ibid., 37. Gregory sometimes changed the very design for particular works of the *Miracula* as he went along. For example, he decided to write a third book about Martin's miracles only upon completion of *VSM* 2; Shaw, "Chronology," 127-28.

74 In keeping with this general chronology, Gregory himself commented how he first decided to record stories of miracles at saints' tombs and only afterwards resolved to write saints' lives; *VP* general preface. For the idea that Gregory composed independent *vitae* which eventually became the *VP*: Shanzer, "So Many Saints," 47; Shaw, "Chronology," 132-33. Shaw, ibid., 116 n. 52, reminds, however, that no manuscript evidence exists to indicate the Lives ever circulated in any format other than as a collection.

75 Richard Shaw, ibid., 139-40, offers a fascinating, seemingly plausible hypothesis for Gregory starting composition of *VSJ* prior to him becoming bishop and writing *VSM* 1. According to the theory, the 571 vacancy for the episcopal seat at Clermont occasioned Gregory to begin writing *VSJ*. The theory hinges on an interpretation of *VSJ* 32, where Gregory wrote: "Now it is proper to end this small book by recounting a few [stories] about those [other] places that have [Julian's] relics;" trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 184. Gregory in fact did not end the *VSJ* a "few" stories after *VSJ* 32; rather, he extended the book to a full fifty chapters. Shaw interprets the flaw to possibly indicate where Gregory was signaling a conclusion for an early draft of the *VSJ* written in 571. Supportive of this possibility, the first anecdote with subject matter dating explicitly after 571 is *VSJ* 34. An alternative interpretation for the aforementioned passage from *VSJ* 32 is that of Danuta Shanzer, who explains how Gregory here employed "a 'false expectation' finishing formula." Shanzer explains that *VSJ*'s structure sensibly begins at the martyr's twin places of origin, Vienne and Brioude, and branches out to other locations before the author finally

Of course, during his first anxious months as bishop, the Auvergnat interloper could not have imagined the protracted carnage his diocese would experience over the next four years. During that stretch of time at least four armies despoiled the Touraine, meting a level of warfare and concentrated destruction rare by Merovingian standards.[76] About this violence Ian Wood remarked that "[i]t is possible that the wars of 573 to 575 marked the worst period of civil war in sixth-century Francia."[77] Similarly, Guy Halsall characterized the campaigns of 574 and 575 as "no ordinary war," and about the depredations up to 576 he wrote: "Gregory had just seen a war in which the usual means of restraining warfare had failed: oaths were broken, churchmen, even of renowned sanctity, were ignored, churches were violated and foreign peoples brought in to fight."[78] Halsall outlined the tumults of these very years in a brilliant article centered upon an analysis of *Historiae* 5 prologue, wherein he concluded: "The events of 574-6, and especially Sigibert's murder, were clearly those that prompted Gregory to begin his [historical] work."[79] My own analysis of death and afterlife in Gregory's corpus leads me to a conclusion that aligns closely with Halsall's general assertion.[80] Adding our antagonist for this section's narratives back into the equation, I would put it that Death's rampage over the Touraine in the first years of Gregory's episcopacy compelled the author to complement his nascent hagiographical passion with historiography.

In the decade and more since publication of Halsall's article, once common scholarly exertions to exhibit models for Gregory producing the *Historiae* in multiple stages and to hazard speculative chronologies for when he wrote individual anecdotes or books have become doubly *verboten*.[81] Of late the

loses his sense of order at *VSJ* 34; "So Many Saints," 33-34. I accept the latter's explanation for *VSJ* 32. Likewise, with Shanzer I see Gregory starting his "hagiographical career" with the two "shrine-based" works, both begun only after he had become bishop at Tours; ibid., 24.

76 For a count of at least four armies: Halsall, "Preface to Book V," 309 n. 54.

77 Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 89.

78 574 and 575: Halsall, "Preface to Book V," 307; 576: ibid., 310. On campaigning in Merovingian Gaul: Halsall, *Warfare and Society*, 134-62, with reference to 574 and 575 at 140-41.

79 Halsall, "Preface to Book V," 311.

80 More specifically, Halsall proposed that Gregory likely started his history around Easter 576, when King Chilperic's rebellious son Merovech was holed up at Saint Martin's basilica. Halsall asserted Gregory probably wrote the preface to *Historiae* 5 before embarking on "a history from Creation to Sigibert's assassination, carefully structured into four books…"; Halsall, "Preface to Book V," 312.

81 To be sure, researchers long have warned against such practices even while ignoring their own advice. Two prominent sages who wisely cautioned against producing chronologies for the *Historiae*'s composition and then did more or less that very thing were Gabriel Monod and Walter Goffart. Do not speculate: Monod, *Études critiques*, 45; Goffart, *Narrators*, 124. Offering dates

most strident voice to oppose theories for Gregory employing diachronic composition, or writing his historical books by and large in chronological order, is that of Alexander Murray.[82] In these regards Murray is undeniably correct. Most significantly he has provided substantial evidence to reveal how Gregory very late into his life was composing chapters even for early books of the *Historiae*. One line of evidence which Murray contends gives proof that Gregory wrote continually on the history is the fact that the entire work is structured according to an Austrasian perspective. Specifically, he asserts, the author used regnal dating from Childebert II's reign from *Historiae* 5 to 10, and before that he focused on the monarchs Theudebert and Sigibert, in whose eastern Frankish/Austrasian realms Gregory's Auvergne usually rested up to late 575.[83] Murray then contends that no evidence exists to establish that Gregory wrote some part of the history before 585.[84] While on the one hand Murray has concluded that the *Historiae* as it presently exists may only be conceived as a product of Childebert's reign, on the other he acknowledges that Gregory may have begun compiling historical "notes or memoranda at any time during his episcopacy, or indeed during his literate lifetime."[85] Murray deems it a fruitless enterprise to conjecture on a moment in time when Gregory either conceived to write history, or adjusted his intention for the work after he began it. To his credit it seems Murray is one scholar who has managed to keep to his own advice and has resisted the Siren's Song of speculating on watershed moments impacting the *Historiae*'s composition.

I am no Odysseus. As with the *Miracula* so for the *Historiae*, I cannot help but think it a valuable endeavor to offer plausible scenarios for what inspired Gregory to broaden his compositional habit to other genres and sub-genres.[86] Such efforts should be all the more welcomed when tendered

for books' completion: Monod, *Études critiques*, 45-49; Goffart, *Narrators*, 153. To be fair, Goffart merely suggested it was possible that Gregory finished *Historiae* 1 to 4 by 580. Guy Halsall, while critical of Martin Heinzelmann's submission of a theory of two-stage composition, suggests a date of 580 for when Gregory completed *Historiae* 1 to 4, while proposing that by that year the writer may have begun the fifth book; Halsall, "Preface to Book V," 307 (versus two stages), 312 (completion of four books).

82 Murray, "Composition"; idem, "Chronology."

83 Murray, "Composition," 66: Books 5 to 10 use regnal dates for Childebert II.

84 Murray, ibid., 91, writes: "There is actually no evidence that any part of the Histories (I include here the far less contentious Books 1-4) was written prior to Childebert's taking control of the city [of Tours] in 585 and a great deal of evidence points to a compositional date after that time."

85 Ibid., 92.

86 A case in point in regards to the *Miracula* is Richard Shaw's theory for the 571 vacancy at Clermont causing Gregory to write the *VSJ*; see above, note 75. Although I do not subscribe to the scenario, I acknowledge its limited plausibility and I applaud the brilliantly thought-provoking theory.

in the context of recent scholarly developments and when provided from a novel angle. As always, we must allow time to tell about such proposals, which inevitably it does. There are three items which compel me to suspect Gregory decided to write history in the immediate aftermath of Sigibert's demise. First is the presence of a calculation of years from Creation to Sigibert's death in 575 located between *Historiae* 4 and 5. This item must be considered with added reflection on the distinct difference in the number of years covered by the work's first four books versus its final six. As is well known, the first four books of the *Historiae* reportedly cover 5596, 112, 37 and 29 years for a total of 5774 years and they evince only a general chronological interest on the author's part, while the last six books cover sixteen years altogether with the contents presented in a strongly annalistic manner. One might attribute this jarring discontinuity in pacing to the author's intention for the first four books to serve as an introduction to the latter six, if not for the presence of the calculation of years at the end of *Historiae* 4.[87] If Gregory began composing the work during Childebert II's reign, what reason would he have had to provide two calculations of years, one at the end of *Historiae* 4 and another at the very end of the work?[88] Bearing in mind that this massive work remains unfinished and unpolished, to me the unnecessary retention of the first computation up to Sigibert's death likely constitutes a vestige of an original intention to compose four books of history.[89] Its presence is akin to the survival of a half dozen references throughout the *Historiae* to a *Liber miraculorum*, which betray an early authorial conception for *GM* and *GC* comprising two parts of a single *liber* instead of two separate books as they now stand.[90] Although Gregory subsequently abandoned that plan, he did not scour his history books of all mentions of the previous design. It should be stressed that I do not mean to suggest Gregory composed an early version of the history encompassing four books; rather, I acknowledge the contents of *Historiae* 1 to 4 may have been nowhere close to complete whenever the writer started compiling anecdotes about events datable to Chilperic's reign, and beyond. Gregory may have decided to write a fifth book of the *Historiae*, and then another, and so on, consecutively

87 For *Historiae* 1-4 as introductory: e. g., Goffart, *Narrators*, 118, 124, 166.

88 For a claim that the first computation has a structural purpose to signal a new rhythm which the *Historiae* takes on starting in the fifth book: Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity*, 27.

89 Cf. Pizzaro, "Gregory of Tours," 342. Heinzelmann, "Works of Gregory," 284, n. 9, has now abandoned his earlier two-recension scheme. For the earlier argument: idem, *Gregory of Tours*, 114-15.

90 *Historiae* 1.47, 2.5, 8.2, 9.2, 9.15, 9.24; Shaw, "Chronology," 134-35 with n. 121.

over time, similarly to his choices to begin writing *VSM* 3 around 581 and *VSM* 4 around 587. But whereas Gregory finished and polished each book of the *VSM* in order to publish one before proceeding to the next, he did not do the same with the *Historiae*, which obviously he intended to publish only as a whole.[91]

As with his hagiographical books, so for the *Historiae*, despite the fact that Gregory sometimes revamped a work's structure, or added to a work's temporal scope, this is no reason to conclude that he wrote multiple recensions or composed in stages. In fact, Gregory's episodic approach to composition, which initiated with *VSM* 1 and most likely had as its primary model Sulpicius Severus's *Vita Martini* and *Dialogi*, lent itself to the author inserting anecdotes into multiple works in progress simultaneously.[92] It is because of Gregory's ongoing practice of plugging chapters into different works that I do not perceive the presence of several anecdotes in the early books of the *Historiae* identified as having been written only from 585 and later as an impediment to suspecting the author conceived and began writing the *Historiae* prior to Childebert II's reign. For example, it seems clear that an overabundance of material about Martin's miracles caused Gregory to opt to insert eight chapters about the confessor of Tours into the *GC* instead of the *VSM*.[93] Likewise, Gregory's very late completion (in 591 or 592) of *VP* 8, a *Vita Nicetii* about his great-uncle from Lyons, apparently occasioned him to add a chapter about the same saint into *Historiae* 4.[94] This insertion of a standalone tale contrasting the saintly Nicetius of Lyons with his wicked successor, Bishop Priscus, attests to Gregory's habit of composing new material for one book while simultaneously adding to and editing another unfinished work. But it does not constitute proof that the author had not composed most of *Historiae* 4 by this late date. Neither does it refute the possibility that Gregory could have written much of that same book prior to 585.[95]

A second item that leads me to suspect the shocking tumults of Gregory's early episcopacy, including Sigibert's assassination, led him to write

91 For *VSM* there is the possible exception of the delayed circulation of *VSM* 1, as mentioned above, p. 101.

92 Shaw, "Chronology," 131-32. On Gregory's episodic composition: Goffart, *Narrators*, 113-14.

93 Shanzer, "So Many Saints," 27 with n. 62.

94 *Historiae* 4.36. For the date of *VP* 8: James, *Life*, 56, n. 17. Cf. Murray, "Chronology," 176.

95 Gregory well may have inserted the brief chapter about Saint Friardus (*Historiae* 4.37) into the *Historiae* at the same time he put in the previous chapter. Acknowledging the hagiographical nature of these two anecdotes, he then may have added to *Historiae* 4.38 the words: *Ergo, ut ad historiam recurramus.*

history is the structure of his historical work. It is not by accident that Gregory devised the books of the *Historiae* based upon Death's handiwork. *Historiae* 1 ends with Saint Martin's passing; *Historiae* 2 with Clovis's expiration; *Historiae* 3 with King Theudebert I's demise (not counting a final chapter on the bitter winter at year's end); and *Historiae* 4 with the tale of Sigibert's sudden death.[96] The decision to conclude *Historiae* 3 and 4 with the deaths of Austrasian monarchs does not constitute evidence that the author can have started writing these books only after Chilperic's death in 584. For if we are asked to accept that use of Childebert II's regnal dates for events during Chilperic's reign in the *Historiae* would have occasioned a charge of treason if written during the Neustrian ruler's reign, dating earlier events with Sigibert's regnal dates at the same time apparently did not. For example, recalling how Gregory wrote *VSM* 1 and 2 prior to 585 and published both while King Chilperic was his overlord, one may note that the only regnal dates provided in either of those books pertain not to Chilperic, but to Sigibert.[97] Furthermore, in contrast to three mentions of Sigibert as *rex gloriosissimus* in *VSM* 1 and 2, Gregory's only mention of King Chilperic in *VSM* 2 entails a remark that after Sigibert died and Childebert II escaped death (at Chilperic's hands no less), Chilperic "grabbed away" (*coepisset*) the realm.[98] Gregory's use of *coepisset* in a book that publicly circulated during Chilperic's reign suggests the author did not expect to suffer any consequences for implying the Neustrian ruler's takeover of Sigibert's kingdom was illegitimate. Furthermore, Gregory's Austrasian partisanship derived not only from his own association with Sigibert but also from earlier family involvements which Florentius and Gallus had had with Kings Theuderic and Theudebert. One may conclude from this that there is nothing in *Historiae* 1 to 4 that Gregory would have felt compelled to hold back from putting to paper during Chilperic's reign.

Whatever year Gregory decided to extend the scope of the *Historiae* to cover events dateable to Chilperic's reign and beyond, the author determined to retain the thematic design of concluding books with chapters pertaining to death. *Historiae* 5 ends with a prophecy of the death of Chilperic's sons, and *Historiae* 6 ends with Chilperic's demise. *Historiae* 7 finishes with the first half of a tale about a feud at Tours in which to that point at least a dozen men

96 Chapter 5 will address Gregory's assessments of these individuals' eternal fates.

97 *VSM* 1.32: *secundo anno Sigiberthi gloriosissimi regis*; *VSM* 2.1: *Sigiberto gloriosissimo rege duodecimo anno regnante*.

98 Another *gloriosissimus* for Sigibert: *VSM* 2.7. Chilperic: *VSM* 2.27.

already had been murdered.[99] Gregory ended *Historiae* 8 with the death of the Visigothic King Leuvigild, but *Historiae* 9 as it stands concludes with a report of portentous weather.[100] It may be that the work's incompletion explains why its final two books lack a final chapter with a proper death-motif.[101] Although the tome was not done, in anticipation of finishing it Gregory wrote a concluding chapter for *Historiae* 10 which listed the bishops of Tours and their accomplishments, including his own.[102] To this he appended a second, updated calculation of years. Like the earlier computation at the end of *Historiae* 4, Gregory probably intended this reckoning of a total number of 5792 years, a mere 208 years from a nice, round 6000, to discomfort sinful readers by intimating the looming Apocalypse's approach.[103]

A final item that leads me to suspect Gregory's determination to write history dates to his early episcopacy entails a bit of "intellectual biology," slightly on the psychological side. I have addressed in previous chapters how Gregory apparently was a person who took definitive steps forward in his life during intense, and even potentially deadly, moments. Around age eleven he vowed to become a cleric only when it seemed that a virulent fever was about to snuff his life. Around age twenty-five, when he was due to become a deacon, an illness prompted him to make a pilgrimage to Tours, and when that fever worsened to the point he nearly died, rather than postpone a vow, he completed the sacred obligation and became a devotee of Saint Martin. In late 573 Gregory was thrust onto the episcopal seat at Tours within three weeks of Eufronius's demise. This resulted soon after in him taking a vow to update the miracles of Saint Martin in writing. He forthwith initiated a hagiographical program which he started to

99 *Historiae* 7.47. The drama resolves at *Historiae* 9.19. In the chapter prior to that reporting the first part of the feud at Tours Gregory detailed the murder of a merchant; *Historiae* 7.46.

100 The weather report at *Historiae* 9.44 follows a five-chapter consideration of a deadly revolt at Poitiers' Convent of the Holy Cross, one of the work's *causes célèbres*; *Historiae* 9.39-43. The story spills into the next book: *Historiae* 10.15-17. On the nuns' revolt at Holy Cross: Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 64-79; Götsch, "Der Nonnenaufstand von Poitiers"; Scheibelreiter, "Königstöchter im Kloster."

101 On Gregory's completion of the *Historiae*, see below, pp. 285-92.

102 In addition to Gregory's conclusion for the *Historiae* being aspirational, so was his remark at *Historiae* 10.31 about the books he had written. In fact, all but three of those twenty books had yet to be finished; Shaw, "Chronology," 113-16, 135-38.

103 Furthermore, writing that the world still had two centuries remaining also could serve to defuse millennialist claims of an imminent end time; Landes, "Lest the Millennium," 166-68. For Gregory's concern, expressed at *Historiae* 1 prologue, that the peoples of Gaul were insufficiently concerned about the approaching end times; Brown, *Ransom of the Soul*, 155-57. On the 6000 days/6000 years tradition traced from the *Letter of Barnabus* to the sixth century: Palmer, *Apocalypse*, 42-50.

augment perhaps not long after. Then Death trounced his diocese for four years. According to Gregory, the war that ensued was to be attributed to Kings Guntram, Chilperic, and Sigibert acting greedily and sowing discord, heedless of the fact that they risked losing God's grace.[104] We will consider in detail Gregory's thoughts on these kings' actions and fates in Chapter 5. But for now we need only acknowledge that it is very plausible to envision how a novel bishop already engrossed in the business of writing hagiography, an author intent on extolling the salvific powers of the saints to congregants, when caused to witness many of those very souls dying on an inconceivable scale over four years, felt compelled to adjust his scheme. He switched from a literary program that attested to the *virtutes sanctorum* to one encompassing "as much the saints' powers as the people's slaughters" (*tam virtutes sanctorum quam strages gentium*), from one that celebrated the *beati* to one contrasting "the happy life of the blessed with the downfalls of the wretched" (*filicem beatorum vitam inter miserorum … excidia*).[105]

Instead of unfolding an overarching historical plot such as the rise and fall of the Merovingians, Gregory decided to do in the *Historiae* what he was already doing in the *Miracula*.[106] He imparted a bevy of moral lessons by parading across his pages a myriad of individuals active over time, both *beati* and *miseri*, in the case of the *Historiae* mostly the latter.[107] He expected readers to study, compare, and contrast the details about particular people's actions, characters, and deaths, which done they might realize the need to repent of their own sins and improve the likelihood of salvation.[108] As he did for his writings on Saint Martin, so did Gregory

104 *Historiae* 5 prologue. For an argument that this prologue pertains specifically to the royal combatants embroiled in the campaigns of Gregory's early episcopacy: Halsall, "Preface to Book V," 307-15. For an alternative argument that the preface constitutes a general condemnation of civil warfare addressed to no particular king: Murray, "Chronology," 165-67.

105 *Historiae* 2 prologue; cf. Goffart, *Narrators*,153. Goffart, ibid., 172-73, proposed *Historiae* 2 prologue as the place where Gregory best conveyed the work's design.

106 On the lack of a central theme in the *Historiae*: Goffart, ibid., 156.

107 On Gregory as moralist: Goffart, ibid., 168-83.

108 Consider several levels of instruction Gregory imparted to readers in regards to one practice he frequently visited in his writings, perjury. By recounting how an individual perjurer incurred a divine physical punishment which lasted until he admitted his guilt, Gregory assured his audience that God's saints would avenge perjury committed at their tombs; *VSJ* 19; cf. *VSJ* 40. By narrating how several individuals died after committing perjury, he indicated how the consequences for risking this crime sometimes proved fatal; *GC* 91; *GM* 19; *Historiae* 3.14, 8.16. By indicating how a man who died shortly after committing perjury at Saint Martin's basilica went to hell, the writer established that perjurers could face eternal consequences for their actions; *VSM* 1.31.

quickly cause the content of his history to rapidly zoom in on that setting which most interested him, Gaul in the not so distant past.[109] His reason for doing this was because he intended the *Historiae*, like the *Miracula*, to convey a poignantly near-contemporary pastoral and soteriological message to his audience. Forged through decades of familial instruction and ecclesiastical studies and tempered in an atmosphere of Death exultant, it is with a consideration of Gregory's distinctive pastoral agenda that this chapter will conclude.

Bishop, Author, Pastor

By 574 Gregory was writing books about saints and miracles. The turbulence in and around Tours during the first years of his episcopacy most likely inspired him to add history to his literary repertoire. As he composed history and hagiography at the same time, he never fully separated one genre from the other. For example, he packed the *Historiae* with miracle stories, some of which were different versions of tales from the *Miracula*, and he even put several miniature *vitae* in the former work.[110] Writing history enabled the hagiographer to address a second side to the same coin; through the *Miracula* Gregory extolled the saints, while in the *Historiae* he highlighted the futility of life in this world, thereby impressing readers as to why they needed the saints.[111] Beyond this now common realization, what must be stressed is that whether writing the *Historiae* or *Miracula* our author suffused his books with a theologically well-developed pastoral message.

109 Cf. Goffart, *Narrators*, 131. I differ somewhat with Goffart, ibid., 166, who identified the parameters of Gregory's *gesta praesentia* (*Historiae* general preface) as the events covered in *Historiae* 5 to 10. The moral lesson Gregory expected readers to take from the example of King Sigibert, whose life and death are related in *Historiae* 4, is every bit as significant as any other the bishop laid out; see below, pp. 248-55. There is nothing introductory about the writer's consideration of Sigibert. Otherwise, Gregory at *Historiae* 3 prologue characterized Arius of Alexandria, Hilary of Poitiers, Clovis, and Alaric II as active in *nostra tempora*. This wording strongly recommends that the author regarded matters covered in *Historiae* 2 to 4 as *gesta praesentia*. Characterizing *Historiae* 1 as introductory seems appropriate. In that book Gregory fulfilled the obligations of covering the entirety of time which he felt the dictates of the genre of world history demanded he provide, and he carried his audience up to *nostra tempora*. See Vollmann, "Gregor IV." For the significance of Gaul to Gregory's historiography: Reimitz, "Social Networks."

110 *Vitae* in the *Historiae*: *Historiae* 6.6, 7.1, 10.29.

111 Cf. Goffart, *Narrators*, 152-53.

Writings and Sermons

As with other late ancient ecclesiastics, the principal way Gregory availed pastoral care was through preaching.[112] Unfortunately, none of Gregory's sermons remain, but not only does his extant corpus indicate how he honored the skill of preaching, it also provides clues suggestive of his own sermons' tenor and content.[113] First, the bishop of Tours exhibited a high degree of respect for accomplished preachers. We already have encountered the high praise he attributed to the sermons of his former tutor, Bishop Avitus of Clermont.[114] An earlier Auvergnat bishop whose eloquence Gregory admired was Sidonius Apollinaris. So enamored was he of Sidonius's skill, he compiled a book of his liturgical masses.[115] A later bishop whose preaching Gregory likely never witnessed but whose approach to moralizing he thought ideal was Nicetius of Trier.[116] Nicetius used to call out congregants' vices from the pulpit and then pray for the remission of sins for those who confessed. What some contemporaries of Nicetius must have imagined an exasperating zealousness – the prelate reportedly countered death threats hurled by some whose sins he announced by presenting his neck for the cutting – Gregory applauded as indicative of an unwavering sense of justice.[117] Finally, another preacher whose courage Gregory admired was Pope Gregory I. When our author acquired a copy of

112 Lisa Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success*, 12, identifies four components to pastoral care in late antiquity: 1) getting the faithful to heaven; 2) communicating the Christian message; 3) providing for the congregation materially; and 4) building the structures of the church, which includes building clerical authority and fostering community. More generally on pastoral care: Beck, *Pastoral Care*; Demacopoulos, *Five Models*. On preaching: Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success*, 16-28; Beck, *Pastoral Care*, 259-83.

113 Two surviving sermon collections from sixth-century Gaul are Caesarius of Arles' corpus of more than two-hundred sermons and seventy-six more written by multiple authors and gathered in the Eusebius Gallicanus collection. Caesarius's extant sermons are not originals; they are pared down versions meant for circulation among other ecclesiastics who could tailor each piece to specific needs; see Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles*, 9. On the Eusebius Gallicanus sermon collection: Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success*, 29-38.

114 *VP* 2 prologue. Others in *VP* whom Gregory singled out for their preaching were the Jura abbots Lupicinus and Romanus, and Ursus and Leobatius, two abbots of the Touraine active early in the sixth century; *VP* 1.2, 18 prologue.

115 The mass book is lost. But a tale from that book which Gregory revisited briefly in the *Historiae* relates that when Sidonius traveled to a monastery to preside over a festival and discovered the necessary liturgical book was missing, he astounded attendees by performing the entire service from memory; *Historiae* 2.22.

116 *VP* 17.3; cf. *Historiae* 10.29.

117 *VP* 17.2. What Gregory knew of Nicetius derived from conversations with the bishop of Trier's protégé, Aredius of Limoges, whom Gregory befriended; *Historiae* 10.29. Perhaps Aredius lent written versions of Nicetius's sermons in order to show Gregory his mentor's preaching talent.

the Roman Gregory's written exhortation for the faithful of the Eternal City to perform penance when a pestilence ravaged the city in 589, so impressed was the Gallic Gregory, he published the letter in full in *Historiae* 10.[118]

Beyond simply admiring others' sermons Gregory undoubtedly lifted passages from them and composed his own sermons too. Several anecdotes from the *Miracula* apparently originated as revisions of other writers' homiletic works. Gregory likely refashioned these for use in his own preaching.[119] One such example is his prose rendering of four poetic sermons by Paulinus of Nola about his patron, Saint Felix.[120] Gregory similarly may have extracted nuggets about the martyr Genesius of Arles from the Eusebius Gallicanus sermon collection.[121] As for original material, Danuta Shanzer suggests a means to discover presumed "sermon extracts" in the *Miracula* by identifying "suspiciously generalizing or moralizing" introductions to hagiographical anecdotes as homiletic vestiges.[122] Examples include: "*Presumption* is not a useful trait in anyone…" "How outstanding a thing *innocence* is! How worthy is the pure mind!" Or "Lo, what great riches poverty in the world heaps up for itself!"[123] Guy Halsall has proposed that the prologue for *Historiae* 5 may have originated from an Easter homily delivered in 576.[124] Gregory probably expected the individual *vitae* of *VP* would be used during liturgies at festivals for the various saints whom he glorified.[125] Altogether the evidence suggests Gregory may have been as much an enthusiastic preacher as he

On Nicetius as an ideal bishop attempting to encourage penitence: Uhalde, "Proof and Reproof." See further on Nicetius: Gauthier, *L'évangélisation des pays*, 172-89.

118 *Historiae* 10.1. Prior to his presentation of the copy of the letter, Gregory recounted events during the flood at Rome. The writer's narrative reveals how he was willing to literarily embellish certain accounts about natural calamities. For example, his description mentions that a large dead dragon washed down the Tiber River during the plague. Gregory most likely intended this literary elaboration in order to intimate for sophisticated readers "in the know" a reference to the moribund cult of Asclepius, which once famously thrived at Rome; Stoclet, "*Consilia humana*," 138-39. See also Patterson, "*Adversus Paganos*."

119 Raymond Van Dam has suggested that "because Gregory preferred to stress the moral rather than the physical dimension of suffering [about martyrs], some of his own stories may have been used as readings during the liturgy, either as replacements for existing histories or as substitutes for unavailable accounts"; *Martyrs*, 15, where Van Dam suggests *VSM* 40, 46, 103 as tales for *lectiones*.

120 *GM* 103.

121 *GM* 67, 68; see Van Dam, *Martyrs*, 92, n. 82.

122 Shanzer, "So Many Saints," 47.

123 *GC* 84, 69, 96; Shanzer, "So Many Saints," 47, including translations. Van Dam, *Martyrs*, 15, also noted *GM* 69 as possibly derived from a sermon. Other possible recycled sermon material according to Shanzer, "So Many Saints," 47-48: *GM* 74; *GC* 110; *VSM* 1.31; *VSJ* 36.

124 Halsall, "Preface to Book V," 311-15.

125 Brunhölzl, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur*, 1: 137.

was a prolific hagiographer. According to Lisa Bailey, the main objective among late ancient pastors was to usher the faithful to heaven.[126] Gregory undoubtedly geared his own multi-faceted effort at pastoral care towards this singular desired effect. The bishop's sermon-styled material may be analyzed along with other passages from his books to reveal the pastoral and soteriological underpinnings for his entire corpus.

Sin, Penance, Grace

The most basic context within which to consider Gregory's distinctive pastoral vision for shepherding souls towards salvation is the post-Constantinian world. In the course of the fourth century, during which period Christianity went from persecuted minority sect to the official religion of the empire, most people in the Mediterranean basin adopted a Christian identity, some zealous and earnest and knowledgeable about their faith and others less committed. "The focus of Christian pastoral care became dealing with sin in the Church and finding ways to cleanse it while keeping the sinner within."[127] A principal western figure in the late ancient drive towards establishing a more inclusive Church tolerant of many peoples' shortcomings was Augustine of Hippo. In the course of him contesting two rigorist sects, the Donatists and Pelagians, Augustine influentially stressed how Christians after baptism must continually engage in penance to remove unavoidable small sins.[128] To make his point Augustine deployed a metaphor, that each person is a ship taking on water (incurring sins) and so one must act as a bilge, pumping out water (doing penance) lest the ship sink.[129] Among notable Gallic ecclesiastics whom scholars long have acknowledged as popularizing Augustinian inspired notions of humans as sinners in need of regular penance were Avitus of Vienne and Caesarius of Arles. Another writer resident in Gaul more recently identified as espousing an Augustinian inspired theology of sin is Venantius Fortunatus.[130] Augustine's reception in Gaul famously was not without controversy. For example, the bishop of Hippo's assertion that salvation results from God's unmerited gift of grace

126 Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success*, 12.

127 Ibid., 86.

128 Ibid., 84-86. Additionally on late ancient penitential practices: Vogel, *La discipline pénitentielle;* Price, "Informal Penance."

129 Augustine of Hippo, *Sermo* 56; Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success*, 86; Brown, *Ransom of the Soul*, 100.

130 Weaver, "Prosper's Theological Legacy," 389-94; and see now Benjamin Wheaton, "Venantius Fortunatus."

ran counter to the writings of some southern Gauls, most notably John Cassian and Faustus of Riez, who stressed how human agency played a determinant role alongside grace in enabling redemption. The dynamic of several generations of Christian writers periodically trading barbs over the roles of grace and agency in the salvific process stirred the imaginations of early modern scholars who magnified differences and turned a series of rare disputes into the so-called "semi-Pelagian controversy."[131] Recent scholars have tamped down on the idea that late ancient writers such as Caesarius and the Eusebius Gallicanus preachers composed sermons and the like with this theological debate singularly in mind.[132] What also weighed heavily on Gallic pastors was a practical concern to establish how best to convince one's own congregants to acknowledge human sinfulness and to live moral lives in hopes of achieving redemption. In the context of more nuanced assessments of pastoral motivations for Gallic authors, what can be ascertained about Gregory's pastoral agenda?

In keeping with the predominant late ancient soteriological paradigm, Gregory stressed a human condition of sinfulness, which could be overcome by grace, ultimately resulting in salvation. By virtue of the sound ecclesiastical education Gregory received, it is highly unlikely he would have been unfamiliar with Augustine's hamartiology, despite him never mentioning the bishop of Hippo in his corpus.[133] But while Augustine stressed Adam and

131 A lasting impression set in among early modern scholars whereby they perceived Gallic ecclesiastics composing writings solely in service to one's theological camp, either a "rigorist and ascetic" band following Cassian and Faustus or a pro-Augustinian, "more pastorally-minded" one that included the likes of Avitus and Caesarius; Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success*, 88. One mid-twentieth century scholar, Gustavo Vinay, even measured the late sixth-century bishop of Tours for his leanings in the "controversy" and rated him close to a Semi-Pelagian; Vinay, *Gregorio di Tours*, 27-28. Vinay gave Gregory little credit as a theologian in general; he accused the bishop of unintentionally arriving at his position on grace, and even then contradicting himself. On the harsh reception of Augustine's predestination in Gaul: Mathisen, "For Specialists Only." For up to date analysis of the controversy's works through the early sixth century: Hwang, Matz, and Casiday, eds., *Grace for Grace*; Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*. See also Smith, *De Gratia: Faustus*. For the Gallic ecclesiastical context: Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*; Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles*.

132 E. g., no theological controversy prevented Caesarius of Arles from penning *Sermones* 197 and 198 based on sermons he presumed Faustus of Riez had composed. While Caesarius maintained the Augustinian idea that humans were undeservedly brought to baptism, he stressed some role for human agency alongside the necessity of grace in order to advance from baptism to salvation. Caesarius caused this position, neither that of Augustine, Cassian, or Faustus, to be enshrined in the canons of the Council of Orange (529); Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 199-234.

133 Augustinian influence: Heinzelmann, "Heresy in Books," 79-82; idem, "'Adel' und Societas," 224-34; idem, *Gregory of Tours*, 150-51, 166 n. 44, 167 n. 45, 168 n. 46.

Eve's original sin as the source for polluting all subsequent humanity, Gregory in *Historiae* 1 glossed over the first couple's sin and emphasized instead how Cain's murder of Abel compelled humans into endlessly committing transgressions. He wrote: "[Cain] was the first man to shed his brother's blood and to murder a member of his own family, for he seized hold of his own brother and overcame him and slew him. … From that moment onwards the entire human race never ceased to commit one execrable crime after another…"[134] While Gregory likely drew an ascription of Adam and Eve as types for Christ and the Church respectively from Avitus of Vienne's writings, the latter was not a source for his characterization of Cain and Abel. For unlike Gregory, Avitus quickly glossed over the brothers in his *De Spiritalis Historiae Gestis*; he did not even mention them by name.[135] One source that quite possibly influenced Gregory in placing such a strong emphasis on Cain's crime is Prudentius's *Hamartigenia*. Prudentius made no mention at all of Adam and Eve in his book about the origin of sin; instead, in that work's preface the poet immediately launched into a tale of the first parricide: "Then a brother in jealousy of the goodness that was breaks his own brother's neck with his bent hoe, staining the new-made world with unnatural bloodshed…"[136] Prudentius went on in the preface to establish Cain as a type (*figura*) for the heretic Marcion, who had taught the separateness of the Old Testament and New Testament gods.[137] Not surprisingly, Gregory gave a brief nod to Marcion in *Historiae* 1, citing him as proof that the Devil inspires heresies and causes divisions among Christians, a characterization similar to what Prudentius advanced.[138]

Gregory may have imagined Cain's parricidal action a particularly appropriate *typus* for all subsequent human crimes during and in the aftermath of the civil warfare he witnessed raging in the Touraine during his early episcopacy. A source dating to around that very period which connected Cain's crime with the violence of the mid-570s is a letter by Bishop Germanus of Paris penned to Queen Brunhild.[139] In that epistle

134 *Historiae* 1.2-3; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 70.

135 Avitus's only reference to Cain and Abel appears in God's direct speech to Adam on what will transpire due to his sin: part of Adam's punishment will be witnessing his own children die; Avitus of Vienne, *De Spiritalis Historiae Gestis* 3.177-89. Throughout the work Avitus exhibited an intentional Augustinian influence by stressing the utter weakness of the postlapsarian human condition, which can only be restored undeservingly through God's grace; Nodes, "Avitus of Vienne's Spiritual History."

136 Prudentius, *Hamartigenia praefatio* 14-17; ed. and trans. by Thompson, *Prudentius*, 1:200-01.

137 Prudentius, *Hamartigenia praefatio* 32; ed. by Thompson, *Prudentius*, 1: 203.

138 *Historiae* 1.28.

139 *Epistulae Austrasicae* 9; Halsall, "Preface to Book V," 312-15.

Germanus asked the queen to dissuade her husband Sigibert from attacking his brother Chilperic. The letter almost certainly pertains to the moment when Sigibert was preparing to assail Chilperic at Tournai in 575. In the letter Germanus rebuked Sigibert for warring against his own brother, even while the prelate assumed the aggressor would win the contest, as nearly everyone must have been expecting at the time. Nevertheless, Germanus couched the impending war in stark apocalyptic terms. Similarly, the *Historiae* bears witness that from the moment Gregory began writing that work he harbored an apocalyptic outlook: current events convinced him that history had entered into the beginning stage of the biblically prophesied end times.[140] Not only did civil warfare loom large in leading Gregory to reach this assessment, as is made clear in the prologues to *Historiae* 1 and 5, the author even cited the identical biblical passage Germanus had used from I Timothy at *Historiae* 1 prologue.[141] For Germanus to convince his royal addressee that a disastrous aftermath assuredly would follow the war, he provided a rundown of biblical instances for which fratricide preceded calamity. The first example he gave was Cain and Able, about whom he wrote: "Cain perpetrated fratricide and received a sentence of punishment up to sevenfold."[142] As Guy Halsall has pointed out, the bearer of Germanus's epistle to Queen Brunhild was none other than Gregory's own maternal great-uncle, Duke Gundulf. This fact strengthens the possibility that the

140 See Halsall, ibid., 302, 306, who counters Giselle de Nie's suggestion that Gregory only added apocalyptic elements to the *Historiae* late in the text, corresponding with the writer becoming progressively pessimistic; de Nie, *Views*, 53, 57-68. Adriaan Breukelaar, *Historiography*, 151-56, theorized that the appearance of a pseudo-prophet at Tours in 587 occasioned Gregory to give theological reflection to history. Only from that point did the author start arranging his heretofore jumble of archivist records into the *Historiae* by adding elements including prologues, calculations of years, and explicit mentions of the end times. For a critique of Breukelaar: Murray, "Chronology," 188-89. James Palmer, *Apocalypse*, 55-78, theorizes that Gregory's writings, along with those of Pope Gregory I, reflect a late antique spike in apocalyptic urgency c. 550 to 604 prompted by conditions including plague, Lombard invasions (for the pope), and civil wars (for our author). Martin Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 76-87, contends that Gregory stressed an apocalyptic theme by amassing anecdotes reminiscent of apocalypse in *Historiae* 10. Sources that obviously impacted Gregory's subject matter and literary style may have justified him adopting an apocalyptic mood. Sulpicius Severus's and Martin of Tours' apocalyptic sentiments are unmistakable: e. g., Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini*, 24.1-3; *Dialogi* 2.14.1-4; *Chronica* 2.7.3, 2.28.1, 2.33.1; Vaesen, "Sulpice Sévère et la fin."

141 Halsall, "Preface to Book V," 313, n. 73.

142 *Epistulae Austrasicae* 9, ed. Gundlach, *MGH*, Epistulae 3, 124: *Cain fratricidium perpetravit et usque septuplum punitionis sententiam suscepit.* On Germanus's heavy use of scripture in this letter to reproach the queen: Tyrrell, *Merovingian Letters*, 200-01.

bishop of Tours became aware of the letter shortly after its composition.[143] If indeed Gregory did read the epistle around 576, perhaps its relevancy to the immediate violent circumstances brought to the fore ideas about human sinfulness that he already had been formulating while reading favorite authors such as Prudentius. Maybe the internecine wars of the mid-570s convinced Gregory at the very moment he was contemplating composing a history that the world's first fratricide should stand as the prototype for all human depravity.

Gregory imagined that God justly responds to human sinfulness sometimes by rebuking humans collectively through punitive epidemics and awesome natural occurrences, and sometimes individually. While the author elaborated on how collective sinfulness occasioned mass retribution in a chapter about Noah's ark in *Historiae* 1, he otherwise rarely offered explicit remarks to that effect elsewhere in the corpus.[144] One exception to this is a passage wherein he shared a conviction that the plague which overwhelmed the Auvergne in 571 happened due to "the people's sins raging" (*ingruentibus peccatis populi*).[145] Gregory similarly assigned blame for a Lombard army's destruction of seven Gallic cities to the inhabitants' "wickedness" (*malitia*).[146] Even more rare to Gregory's writings than attributions of calamities to general sin are instances of him ascribing a catastrophe to the iniquities of one or a few individuals. One example of this involves the mid-570s civil war. Our author placed responsibility for the occurrence not with the people at large but on two belligerent kings who, "making sins" (*peccatis facientibus*), instigated the conflict.[147] Much more frequently, Gregory directly ascribed misfortunes that befell individuals to the sins of the very persons who committed specific misdeeds. For example, he attributed one man's blindness to the fact that he fought another and tried to remove the opponent from Saint Julian's basilica. Similarly, a royal official reportedly incurred a fever and lost his senses because he

143 Halsall, "Preface to Book V," 313-14. Halsall, ibid., 312-15, has proposed more specifically that this letter may have influenced Gregory to compose a homily or homiletic letter in 576, which he later converted into *Historiae* 5 prologue at the start of his effort to write the *Historiae*. This scenario seems plausible.

144 *Historiae* 1.4.

145 *VSJ* 46a.

146 *Historiae* 6.6. In this case the author conveyed his reason for the disaster though direct discourse, causing a holy recluse named Hospicius to prophesy what would occur, and why. Recently on Gregory's use of direct discourse to persuade readers to adopt his own thoughts: Bourgain, "Works of Gregory," 173-74.

147 *Historiae* 4.47 (Kings Guntram and Sigibert), 4.51 (Sigibert); Halsall, "Preface to Book V," 307-09.

took church lands belonging to Julian's church. Likewise, a man lost the abilities to speak and move his arms because he perjured himself in the same martyr's basilica.[148] While Gregory obviously imagined he could identify the particular sins that caused these and other maladies like them, he sometimes confessed to being unable to determine where fault lay. For example, he admitted that he was unsure whether a young man born with deformed hands incurred that condition as a result of his own sins or those of his parents.[149] As Raymond Van Dam has admirably described, Gregory associated sin to the onset of misfortunes, including illness.[150] Of course, most of the miracle stories Gregory chronicled were about sick and infirm persons appealing to saints and then obtaining bodily remedies. And yet, for the vast majority of such anecdotes, the writer did not comment on whatever sin he imagined might have caused these persons' conditions. The reason for this, as John Kitchen has explained, is because Gregory's main objective was not to call out individuals' indiscretions, but to compile evidence of the saints' successes and thereby convince readers and listeners of the holy beings' salvific powers.[151] For Gregory, churches and saints possessed the soteriological solution for human sin, divine grace.

After Augustine had decisively reduced Pelagius to the rank of heretic in the early fifth century, the idea that divine grace was required for the process of expiating sins became standard among western Christians.[152] Gregory joined countless preachers in identifying the presence of grace in established Christian rituals, through which God's ordained ministers oversaw transference of the divine substance to penitent souls. For example, he remarked that Christ while on earth preached repentance and instituted the "grace of baptism" (*baptismi gratiam*).[153] Likewise he wrote that at mass King Guntram approached the altar to receive the "grace of communion" (*communicandi gratia*).[154] Just as he envisioned people usually accumulating sin on an individual basis, Gregory presumably imagined the conferral of grace through rituals most often occurring individually whenever a person

148 *VSJ* 10, 14, 19.

149 *VSM* 2.26.

150 Van Dam, *Saints*, 86-94.

151 Kitchen, "Gregory of Tours," 393-402.

152 Augustine and Pelagius: Brown, *Rise of Western Christendom*, 88-91; idem, *Ransom of the Soul*, 83-114.

153 *Historiae* 1.20. Further examples of *baptismi gratia*: *Historiae* 2.3, 10.28; *communicandi gratia*: *Historiae* 9.3, 9.41; *GC* 64, 93. See also *gratia vespertina*: *VSJ* 20. Gregory wrote that Saint Salvius while a recluse distributed "blessed bread with the fullness of grace" (*eoglogias gratiam plenissimam*); *Historiae* 7.1.

154 *Historiae* 9.3.

participated in a sacrament. But his claim that the presence of God's grace at King Clovis's famous baptism was so effusive, it caused attendees to think they were standing in paradise, suggests Gregory imagined the grace from a ritual intended for one individual could sometimes waft about in a sacred space and impact others.[155] A ritual through which Gregory and others expected grace to be conferred collectively as a matter of course was Rogations.[156] Bishop Mamertus of Vienne in the fifth century had instituted the first such communal ritual in Gaul to cause congregants to repent their sins and thereby give God reason to withdraw His anger from the district.[157] Gregory followed the examples of Mamertus, and of course his own uncle Gallus, among other bishops by instituting Rogations at Tours in 591 in order to assuage God and quell a deadly epidemic.[158] As with other rites he presumably reasoned that the grace imparted through the collective ritual would lessen or nullify the sins of the penitent individuals who shared in the exercise.

Gregory held the common Christian doctrine that if a person expiated all sin from one's soul and died without blemish, that that individual would attain salvation.[159] He likewise espoused the nearly universal late ancient corollary that if a person died shortly after baptism, which ritual blotted out the entirety of one's sin, because there was not sufficient time for the soul to accumulate more sin, that individual would be saved. Gregory exhibited this line of reasoning in an account about King Clovis and Queen Clotild's first child, the newborn Ingomer. After narrating that the latter expired shortly after baptism, he caused the babe's mother to remark that she was not disheartened about Ingomer's demise, because she knew that a person "called" (*vocatus*) while still wearing their baptismal robes would be kept under God's care.[160] Here the author cast his own viewpoint about the guarantee of redemption for the newly baptized deceased through the mouth of an individual whom he expected readers to trust, the pious and respectable queen.[161]

155 *Historiae* 2.31.

156 Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success*, 91-92.

157 *Historiae* 2.34; Avitus of Vienne, *Homilia* 6; Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae* 5.14, 7.11.

158 *Historiae* 10.30.

159 E. g., Gregory prayed at the conclusion of *VSJ*: "May [Julian] stand before the Lord and be successful as an advocate on behalf of [me], his own foster son, so that I might complete the course of this life without the handicap of any blemish…"; *VSJ* 50; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 194-95. Likewise, see Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 4.17; trans. by Roberts, *Poems*, 247: "But because [a boy named Arcadius] departed defiled by no stain, no one should mourn him, for paradise is his home."

160 *Historiae* 2.29.

161 On Queen Clotild and King Clovis, see below, pp. 207-24.

Where unanimity did not exist among late ancient ecclesiastics, including those in Gaul, was in determining the best means for caring for the vast majority of Christians who kept on living and sinning after baptism. Lisa Bailey has explained that while similarities abounded among Gallic pastoral strategies for expiating sin, no standardized program existed; different pastors favored specific penitential techniques according to what they thought would best benefit their particular community.[162] Caesarius of Arles, for example, categorically envisioned almsgiving as a superior form of penance over fasting, while the preacher of Eusebius Gallicanus *Sermo* 58 dismissed almsgiving altogether, asserting that God favored lamentation as a better indicator of contrition.[163] Unlike that anonymous preacher and Caesarius, Gregory gave no hint as to whether he had a preference among praying, fasting, almsgiving and lamentation.[164] Alongside these four commonly favored late ancient penitential practices, all of which feature regularly within Gregory's pages, a fifth activity he apparently thought was particularly conducive to eliminating sin was attending vigils.[165] Interestingly, one show of contrition which Gregory all but excluded from his corpus was the very activity Augustine had made the centerpiece of his penitential advice, daily recitation of the *pater noster* in order to habituate oneself in begging God's mercy.[166] The rather Augustinian Caesarius of Arles frequently referenced the Lord's Prayer in his preaching and he even devoted an entire sermon to the topic.[167] Likewise the strictly Augustine-inspired Fortunatus composed a lengthy prose exegetical piece commenting on every line of the prayer.[168] Gregory, however, only highlighted the *pater noster* one time at *VP* 14 prologue. There he cited Matthew 6:12 alongside two other passages from that apostle's gospel, but in doing so his theme

162 Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success*, 91-92.

163 Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo* 199.2; Eusebius Gallicanus, *Sermo* 58.6. For Caesarius, see also Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success*, 190, n. 70. Bailey, ibid., 93, notes that the preacher for Eusebius-Gallicanus sermon 58 is most similar to Augustine, who was suspicious of almsgiving's value as a form of penance.

164 Bailey, ibid., 90, identifies these as the four practices pastors most regularly commended.

165 A penitential activity rare to Gregory's corpus and so perhaps not as highly esteemed by the author was to kiss a saint's tomb; e. g., *VSM* 2.10; Kitchen, "Gregory of Tours," 395.

166 Lisa Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success*, 93-94, writes: "For Augustine this prayer, representing a mental state as much as an actual action, was the key to the penitential lifestyle. He gave it far more attention than any of the other traditional expiatory acts such as fasting, almsgiving, or lamentation."

167 E. g., Caesarius of Arles, *Sermones* 19.2, 28.4, 35: *De oratione dominica vel amore inimicorum*, 37.6, 38.6, 63.1, 75.3, 91.7, 107.4, 147.7-8, 177.5, 185.1, 187.4, 200.3, 202.4, 229.5, 235.3.

168 Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 10.1.

for the prologue was pardoning others' faults, not begging for God's mercy as Augustine had stressed.[169] Gregory's near disregard for the *pater noster* is matched by the Eusebius Gallicanus preachers, whose sermons hardly mention the Lord's Prayer either.[170]

Of course, one important goal for all late ancient preachers was to discourage people from committing sins in the first place. Caesarius of Arles in his sermons often lambasted congregants, exhorting them not to work on holy days or to frequent persons who used "pagan" magical techniques to give physical relief. Gregory similarly intended many of his anecdotes to dissuade people from sullying holy days through work or sex, just as he composed others to discourage individuals from seeking physical relief from common soothsayers.[171] By providing copious examples in the *Miracula* that depicted people engaged in such activities momentarily suffering divine punishment before realizing the need to turn to a saint, and thereafter recovering, Gregory was attempting to educate readers to acknowledge the sinfulness of these practices and the need to avoid them.[172] While Gregory's general pastoral goals were not unlike those of Caesarius, one profound difference separated their strategies: unlike the bishop of Arles, Gregory believed it completely incumbent upon Christians to seek divine protection, support and grace as conferred through the saints.

The centerpiece of Gregory's pastoral agenda was to encourage the faithful to place their trust in the *virtutes* of saints.[173] Gregory regarded the tombs and relics of the very martyrs and confessors he commended to readers as sources for God's cleansing grace.[174] He interpreted all restorative and liberating miracles that happened at tombs and through relics – e.

169 In the prologue Gregory characterized the forgiveness of trespasses as a "grace" (*huius gratiae beneficium*) which enabled the remission of sins (*delictis nostris … de remissione refugium*); *VP* 14 prologue.

170 Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success*, 94. There are two additional mentions of the Lord's Prayer in Gregory's corpus. *VSM* 2 recounts how an enslaved mute woman regained her speech while trying to recite the *pater noster* at mass, after which she was manumitted; *VSM* 2.30. The other is a passing reference to the *pater noster*; *VP* 16.2.

171 For a comparison of Caesarius and Gregory's approaches to magic: de Nie, *Word, Image and Experience*, V.

172 E. g., Gregory remarked that the example of a man who lost the use of a hand after working on a Sunday and then regained his health at Saint Julian's basilica years later "presented to the people an important lesson"; *VSJ* 11; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 171.

173 Cf. Kitchen, "Gregory of Tours," 388: "To condense Gregory's immense literary output into a motto singling out these [saintly] patrons, let us say that over the calamities he himself narrates, we can hear a steady call: 'Trust the saints.'"

174 Cf. Van Dam, *Leadership and Community*, 274, who writes: "The ritual of healing changed people's lives by putting them in a state of grace from which they were not meant to fall again."

g., healings, exorcisms, prison releases, and resurrections –, as results of divine, expiatory grace being channeled through the saints. For example, he wrote: "Such grace (*gratia*) was attributed to [Saint Lupianus] by God who is the dispenser of all good that at his tomb a blind man deserved [to receive] his sight, a paralytic his mobility, and a mute man his speech."[175] He similarly attributed Saint Martin's cure for a blind boy to the confessor's grace and power: "O marvelous grace (*gratia*)! O formidable power (*virtus*)! For because of your extensive devotion you scatter your gifts on people."[176] Gregory succinctly commented how relics of Saint George kept at a shrine near Le Mans conferred the "grace of healing" (*sanitatum gratia*) to people with various ailments.[177] Furthermore, he detailed that when a man recently struck blind confessed his sins at Saint Julian's basilica, he regained his eyesight and received the saint's grace (*gratiam*).[178] About miracles that happened at Saint Illudius's tomb, he explained: "In fact, at the tomb of the saint the blind are given light, demons are chased away, the deaf receive hearing and the lame the use of their limbs, *by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*…"[179] For Gregory the recurrence of miracles at a tomb or through a relic signified that a deceased holy person was a saint. The author deemed the souls of buried saints, the principal figures whom he praised – Saints Julian and Martin chief among them –, to reside in paradise.[180] For example, about Mitrias of Aix he wrote: "Through his public miracles he often reveals that he lives in heaven."[181] There they would remain until Judgment Day when they assuredly would reunite with their pristine bodies. Gregory imagined that these heaven-dwelling saints existed in a state of permanent perfection, fully devoid of sin, which qualified them as reliable and lasting transmitters of divine grace.

Van Dam, ibid., further suggests the "ritual of healing" may have surpassed baptism in importance in Gallic society.

175 *GC* 53; trans. based on Van Dam, *Confessors*, 61.

176 *VSM* 3.16; trans. based on Van Dam, *Saints*, 166.

177 *GM* 100. Relics of wax, dust, and threads from the tomb of Nicetius of Lyons confer *gratiam sanitatis*; *VP* 8.6. Victricius of Rouen, *De laude sanctorum* 11.27-28, asserted that saints' relics contain *perfectam … gratiam perfectamque virtutem*; J. Mulders and R. Demeulenaere, ed., *CCSL* 64, 87.

178 *VSJ* 10. This episode closely parallels the lesson Gregory conveyed at *VP* 14 prologue, which associated forgiveness and grace. Gregory's practice of combining *gratia* with a genitive for healing, *sanitatum* or *curationum*, compares with his use of *gratia* with rituals as mentioned above. Cassian similarly referred to the *prophetiae gratia*; Cassian, *Institutes* 4.23.

179 *VP* 2.5; trans. by James, *Life*, 16-17, with my italics.

180 On the souls of saints ascending to heaven, see below, pp. 146-57.

181 *GC* 70; trans. by Van Dam, *Confessors*, 74.

To accurately appreciate Gregory's rationale behind encouraging the faithful to believe so completely in saintly *virtutes*, it is important to realize that the bishop did not imagine the existence of an unbreachable divide separating common sinner from heaven-dwelling saint. For example, he directly addressed his presumably sinful audience at *GM* 106 as follows: "So also you, if you manfully and firmly (*viriliter et non tepide*) place the sign of salvation on your forehead or your chest, then by resisting vices *you will be considered a martyr*."[182] This passage conveys Gregory's belief that sinners could become like unto martyrs, by which he here meant not simply those who died for their faith but also "bloodless" martyrs who practiced acts of self-denial and so became "dead to the world." What enabled him to diminish a sharp distinction between sinner and saint was acknowledgment that the martyrs, prior to going to heaven, like any sinner, previously spent time living on earth where they had been tempted by sins and had overcome the latter with divine support. For example, he wrote: "For the martyrs themselves achieved their victories [while alive] not by their own strength but with the assistance of God through the most glorious sign of the cross."[183] This passage indicates that Gregory acknowledged divine aid was required in the process of a saint achieving salvation; he certainly was no Pelagian, imagining that a living person could earn redemption by maintaining a sin-free condition up to the time of death without divine support. Through a consideration of Gregory's writings about individuals who became heaven-dwelling saints, what I will term "living holy people," his views about the operations of sin and grace become even clearer.

Living Holy People

Gregory envisioned living holy persons from a variety of walks – bishops and abbots, monks and nuns, recluses and religious women – occupying a middling state of being somewhere between the blessed deceased saints and living common sinners.[184] These were the kind of individuals who, to draw from the just mentioned passage from *GM* 106, *viriliter et non tepide* applied the sign of the cross to their forehead and chest, who thereby achieved God's

182 *GM* 106; trans. by Van Dam, *Martyrs*, 133, with my italics. To become a "martyr" the vices Gregory mainly had in mind to avoid involved worldly pursuits and desires. In the same anecdote he wrote: "Hence, by using the aid of the sacred Trinity and by rejecting the desires of the flesh we are worthy to become martyrs…"; ibid.

183 *GM* 106; trans. by Van Dam, *Martyrs*, 133.

184 Cf. Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 170-71.

aid and advanced to a state of perfection, and who if still sinless upon death deservedly attained salvation. Gregory regarded such people while they lived as capable of performing miracles not unlike the wonders which the blessed residents of heaven performed. Unlike the celestial saints, however, these individuals presently dwelt upon the earth, and therefore they remained vulnerable to incurring sin. Despite this susceptibility, Gregory importantly imagined such holy people could overcome temptation and achieve a condition of perfection, or spotlessness, while still alive. For example, he wrote that Bishop Illidius of Clermont, while alive, prevailed in "the sanctity of perfect life" (*perfectae vitae sanctitate*).[185] He similarly described how an abbot named Abraham became "perfect in God's works" (*perfectum in Dei opera*).[186] Likewise, about the exceedingly humble Quintianus of Clermont, who in his last days was unable to prevent drool from seeping out of his mouth, because he did not stray from the *viae Dei*, Gregory estimated that he attained a condition of "perfect sanctity" (*perfectus in sanctitate*) prior to his expiration.[187]

Like John Cassian before him, our author envisaged that living holy people progressed in various virtues towards perfection.[188] For example, at *VP* 10 prologue Gregory wrote: "There are many steps by which one can reach heaven… These steps of various works are a progression in the worship of God…"[189] Gregory interpreted such a progression to entail an individual accumulating divine grace. For example, he wrote that Bishop Reticius of Autun "passed through the different grades of spiritual grace in the full achievement of perfection."[190] About the individuals who undertook this lifestyle, Gregory wrote: "These are men who had such a desire to do the work of perfect justice that they first offered a spotless body as a tabernacle for the Holy Spirit and thus came to the sublimity of other virtues."[191] Gregory imagined that anyone who would become such a "martyr" first had to will the good and then had to act – to offer one's "spotless" body. The sin-free condition that resulted from such an exertion made of one's body a "tabernacle"

185 *VP* 2.1.

186 *VP* 3 prologue.

187 *VP* 4.5.

188 Cf. e. g., Cassian, *Institutes* 4.39-40. Also like Cassian, Gregory did not believe such a condition was sustainable without the support of divine aid. Cassian asserted holy people needed to regularly ask God for forgiveness of sins; Cassian, *Collationes*, 22-23.

189 *VP* 10 prologue; trans. by James, *Life*, 71.

190 *GC* 74; trans. by Van Dam, *Confessors*, 78.

191 *VP* 7 prologue; trans. by James, *Life*, 43. For the importance of rejecting materialism in Gregory's thought: Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 178-181.

into which the Holy Spirit would pour divine grace.[192] Gregory believed that living holy people who *desired* justice and *offered* a chaste body *merited* advancement to the "sublimity of other virtues." The kinds of virtues in which holy persons could progress were myriad, but significant among them were charity, almsgiving, chastity, fasting, and attending vigils.[193] Gregory sometimes likened the self- and body-denying travails these individuals willingly undertook in order to extinguish vices to engaging in combat. For example, he wrote: "They made themselves their own persecutors, destroying the vices in themselves, and they triumphed like proven martyrs, having completed the course of their legitimate combat."[194] This combat metaphor is reminiscent of Cassian's *Institutes*, wherein that author instructed monks how to gird for battle in a series of conflicts versus specific vices.[195]

Like Cassian, Gregory too asserted that people who aspired to overcome sin not only needed to strive for the good, they also required divine aid in the process.[196] For example, he wrote: "And this [divine] assistance has been promptly obtained, not only by the martyrs but also by all those whom discipline has strengthened in the life of holiness, earnestly seeking what was promised by their thirst of spiritual desire."[197] Importantly, Gregory here indicated that a living holy person's willful acts of desiring and seeking preceded any grant of divine help. Furthermore, Gregory understood that it was critical for living holy people to persist in requesting divine assistance throughout the process of striving to excel in particular virtues. Therefore, he wrote:

> And indeed, if a desire for martyrdom [i. e., pursuit of virtues and self-denial] was kindled in a mind, the martyr [i. e., living holy person] sought this assistance in order to conquer; if someone wished to fast, he asked

192 E. g., Gregory interpreted a dove landing on Aredius of Limoges' head while he was singing psalms as marking the moment when the Holy Spirit filled the holy man with grace (*eum spiritus sancti gratia iam repletum*); *Historiae* 10.29. The author credited the holy abbots Romanus and Lupicinus with "preparing the tabernacles of the grace of the Holy Spirit" not only in themselves but in many others; *VP* 1 prologue; trans. by James, *Life*, 3.

193 E. g., charity, almsgiving, chastity: *VP* 7 prologue; fasting, vigils, charity: *VP* 12.3.

194 *VP* 7 prologue; trans. by James, *Life*, 43, slightly emended.

195 Martial language: e. g., Cassian, *Institutes*, 5.1, 5.3, 5.12, 5.13, 5.16-20, 6.1, 7.1, 7.28, 8.1, 9.1, 10.1, 11.1, 11.4, 11.7, 12.1.

196 E. g., Cassian, *Institutes*, 6.6; trans. by Ramsey, *Institutes*, 155: "In truth, although grace and victory are the Lord's in all those who progress in virtue and in the conquest of every vice, it is abundantly clear, from both the words of the fathers and the experience of purification itself, that there is a special favor and gift of God accorded to those who have deserved to gain it."

197 *VP* 10 prologue; trans. by James, *Life*, 71.

> for it in order to obtain the necessary strength; if someone wished to preserve his body from all attacks against chastity, he begged for it as a defense; if someone, leaving error, repented and burned with a desire to convert, he implored with tears that he might somehow be supported; and if someone wished to accomplish some good deed, he likewise asked for this help.[198]

It is significant that Gregory provided this passage at *VP* 10 prologue, the theme of which is how one must always invoke heavenly protection. The saint for this *vita*, Fridardus, fulfills the prologue's theme in two episodes which occurred early in his life and in the narrative. First, Friardus used prayer and the sign of the cross to safely harvest crops near a wasp's next, and second, he invoked Christ's name and thereby survived a fall from a tree.[199] The remaining anecdotes about Friardus deviate from the theme of divine protection and depict the saint as a recluse capable of working wonders. The miracle that put Friardus on the map involved him sticking a staff into the ground which grew into a living tree. Friardus also successfully accomplished a resurrection miracle: he revived another tree.[200] Despite providing a comedic quality to some of the narrative elements for *VP* 10, Gregory was serious in the prologue where he stressed how invoking divine aid was critical for living holy people to achieve their desired pious goals. His advice will prove no different when we consider the author's expectations for the behavior of common sinners.

Friardus's high level of spiritual merit, which Gregory applauded, and the recluse's early appeals for divine support compare closely with Armentaria and Gregory's own pious efforts to build spiritual acumen. Where Friardus had the bishop and his mother beat was in his ability to work miracles. Gregory imagined that living holy people received this capability as a result of achieving the aforementioned state of perfection. For example, he wrote that when Abbot Abraham "saw himself perfect in the work of God" and confidently pursued the holy life, God in turn consented for him to perform miracles.[201] Just as Gregory believed miracles wrought at saints' tombs

198 *VP* 10 prologue; trans. by James, *Life*, 71, with my words in brackets. Cf. Vinay, *Gregorio di Tours*, 27.

199 *VP* 10.1.

200 *VP* 10.3. An angel visited Friardus's cell when he expired; *VP* 10.4; *Historiae* 4.37. James, *Life*, 75 n. 6, wonders whether Gregory intended this *vita* as a jab at Friardus's episcopal superior, Bishop Felix of Nantes.

201 *VP* 3 prologue; trans. by James, *Life*, 18. Compare Cassian, *Institutes* 4.23, where Cassian similarly wrote how an Abba John became advanced in the virtue of obedience and thereby

constituted offerings of grace, so too did he imagine that healings and other pious ministrations performed by living holy people on behalf of the downtrodden were a means whereby God extended His grace to humans. For example, he wrote that Bishop Illidius of Clermont by virtue of his "perfect sanctity of life" "accumulated in himself the gift of diverse graces (*diversarum … gratiarum carismata*) bestowed on him by God."[202] Gregory sometimes specified the kind of miracles divine grace enabled living holy people to accomplish. For example, he wrote how God conferred on a woman named Monegundis, who devoted herself to a religious life, the "grace of healing" (*sanitatum gratiam*).[203] Likewise, Bishop Remigius of Reims, who presided over King Clovis's celebrated baptism, "extended the grace of curing (*gratiam curationum*) to the infirm."[204] More specifically, a recluse from the Touraine named Leobardus "obtained so much grace (*gratia*) from God that with his saliva alone he could banish the poison from malignant pustules."[205] These passages taken together indicate how Gregory imagined that living holy people acted as conduits for the very grace sinners required *post baptismum* to overcome the sins which the latter continued to accumulate.

As Peter Brown has established, Gregory did not afford miracle working holy persons the status of full-fledged "saint" while they lived.[206] Recalling the remark at *GM* 106, the author believed that living, self-denying "martyrs" only succeeded by making the sign of the cross, and even then only with God's aid. Gregory expected living holy people, no differently than common sinners, to praise and beseech and invoke the powers of the confirmed saints who already dwelled in heaven. For example, about Monegundis's decision to leave her husband and locate to the basilica at Tours, the author depicted the holy woman "begging for the help of

"was elevated up to the grace of prophecy (*usque ad prophetiae gratiam sublimatus*)"; Petschnig, ed., *CSEL* 17, 68.

202 *VP* 2.1; trans. by James, *Life*, 12.

203 *VP* 19.3. Monegundis determined to pursue a religious vocation only after the deaths of her two children. For Gregory's presentation of Monegundis as an exemplary holy woman: Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 46-53.

204 *GC* 78. Christ similarly granted Abbot Venantius of Bourges the *sanitatum gratiam*, Bishop Nicetius of Trier the *curationum gratia*, and Abbot Ursus the *gratiam curationis*; *VP* 16.3, 17.4, 18.1.

205 *VP* 20.3; trans. by James, *Life*, 129.

206 Peter Brown, *Society and the Holy*, 185 wrote: "'Call no man holy until he be dead' is the motto of Gregory's writings." See also Kitchen, "Gregory of Tours," 385. Gregory interpreted Matthew 7:22-23 at *VP* 2.2 to mean that the powers imparted by dead, entombed saints are superior to those given by living wonderworkers, because the former are no longer susceptible to sin, while the latter are.

St Martin, that he who gave her the desire might give her the means."[207] Similarly, about Leobardus pondering whether or not to abandon a worldly lifestyle, Gregory presented him piously saying: "I shall go to the tomb of the blessed Martin, from which proceeds a healing power. For I believe that [the saint's] prayer will open a way for me to go to God…"[208] For Gregory then, part of a living holy person's pious effort in progressing towards perfection entailed not only beseeching and invoking the support of Christ Himself, but equally seeking assistance from the Lord's fellow heavenly inhabitants, the confirmed saints.

One reason Gregory did not accept all miracle workers as saints is because not every seeming wonderworker operated with godly backing. Gregory was well aware, based on his familiarity with sources like Supicius Severus's writings, plus much personal experience, that some persons deceived the multitudes by putting it out that they were saints, and even by using trickery to convince many they could work miracles.[209] Even if someone's miracles were not tricks, this did not mean their marvelous accomplishments were products of holy power. For example, Gregory told the story of a reclusive deacon named Secundellus before whom Christ appeared to inform that he already was a saint and that his salvation was assured. The deacon followed the vision's seemingly pious advice by abandoning his isolated home and laying hands on the infirm, thereby successfully healing them in Christ's name. It was only when the deacon bragged to his former colleague, Friardus, about his newfound abilities that the latter sensed a deception and helped Secundellus to realize that this "Christ" was in fact the Devil in disguise. Friardus prompted his friend to perform penance to right the condition of his soul.[210] This tale reveals how Gregory held that it took a very spiritually wise individual such as Friardus, or perhaps himself, to properly determine what miracles were products of genuine divine grace.[211]

Another reason Gregory did not count living holy persons as bona fide saints is that, even among those he recognized to possess grace-based

207 *VP* 19.2; trans. by James, *Life*, 121.

208 *VP* 20.2; trans. by James, *Life*, 127.

209 E. g., Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini* 24.1-3; *Historiae* 9.6, 10.25.

210 *VP* 10.2.

211 It was Secundellus's vainglorious behavior that tipped Friardus off to the Devil's deceit. Although Gregory apparently intended funny elements for Friardus's *Life*, he truly admired the recluse's own effort to avoid vainglory. For a recluse who realized that a vision which appeared to a woman in the guise of Saint Martin was in fact the Devil: *VP* 9.2. Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini* 24.4-8, wrote that the Devil appeared before Martin as Christ but the Holy Spirit helped the bishop see through the deceit.

miraculous abilities, there remained the possibility one might lapse back into sinfulness.[212] For example, one individual whom sin nearly derailed from the path towards permanent righteousness was Senoch, an extreme ascetic from the Touraine whose startling ascetic conduct (e. g., wearing chains on his neck, hands and feet, and treading barefoot in winter) and eleemosynary activities attracted the faithful, who in turn brought money to his cell.[213] The recluse redistributed these funds among the poor, thereby freeing more than two hundred people from slavery and debt.[214] But then, reported Gregory, Senoch's accomplishments led the recluse to become vain. After traveling to his homeland of Poitou apparently to brag to relatives, he returned to the Touraine where he continued to behave prideful and self-servingly. When Bishop Gregory took notice, he stepped in and censured Senoch. So successful was the prelate's reproof, Senoch afterwards "purged himself entirely of his vanity and made himself so humble that there remained in him not the smallest trace of pride."[215] But then the reinvigorated ascetic determined to remove himself completely from human contact, compelling Gregory again to intercede. The bishop now insisted that Senoch only seclude himself entirely for forty-five days in winter and during Lent, thereby assuring the Touraine's ill and unfortunate souls access to the thaumaturge for the remainder of the year. As John Kitchen has explained, Gregory did not intend to stifle Senoch's charismatic, overtly ascetic activities; rather, he simply wanted the living holy person to continue making himself available to help the poor and sick.[216] In so doing Gregory was acting as a proper pastor, not only by ensuring a continued source of this-worldly support for the community's destitute, but also by guaranteeing them a continued means to receive God's grace through Senoch's salvific deeds.[217] Our author's remark that after the first intervention Senoch purged

212 For a fallen potential saint named Winnoch, whom Gregory had ordained a priest: *Historiae* 5.21, 8.34.

213 Recently on Gregory and charismatics, including Senoch and Leobardus: Kitchen, "Gregory of Tours," 409-14.

214 *VP* 15.1.

215 *VP* 15.2; trans. by James, *Life*, 96-97.

216 Kitchen, "Gregory of Tours," 411.

217 Gregory's dual pastoring techniques for laity and ascetics reminds of the Eusebius Gallicanus sermon collection, which includes ten sermons addressed to monks alongside the sixty-six others devoted to preaching to laity. On the sermons *ad monachos*: Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success*, 105-26. Gregory's admonition to the veteran ascetic that the Devil uses successes to allow vanity to encroach upon a soul is almost identical to the message of Eusebius Gallicanus *Sermo* 42; ibid., 111-12. Bailey, ibid., 107-08, stops short of identifying the author of sermons 37 to 44 as Faustus of Riez, as others have done, but maintains it is plausible.

himself of every trace of pride (*nulla … penitus radix superbiae*) is more than suggestive that the bishop imagined he had helped the ascetic recover a level of sinless perfection necessary for the holy person to resume his journey on a path that would culminate with sanctity, but only following the recluse's death.[218]

Another ascetic with whom Gregory had to intervene was the recluse Leobardus, who dwelt in a cell near Saint Martin's former monastery, Marmoutiers. There Leobardus prayed, chiseled the rock walls of his chamber, fashioned parchment sheets, studied Scripture, memorized the psalms, and therefore came to be regarded as a model of humility.[219] When Gregory once ventured to the monastery to pray, he chanced upon Leobardus, who had located to a new cell after arguing with his neighboring monks. After the ascetic shared his "depraved thought" (*cogitationem pravam*) with the bishop, "show[ing] us the corruption of the poison that ravaged his heart," Gregory responded by calmly reassuring Leobardus that his idea was a trick of the Devil.[220] Next he sent the recluse two books, Rufinus's Latin version of the *Vita Patrum* and Cassian's *De Institutis Coenobiorum*, from which he could learn how hermits and monks should properly conduct themselves.[221] Thereafter, reported Gregory, Leobardus persisted in piety and merited an abundance of God's grace, in part by extinguishing "the heat of passions in himself" (*in se extinxerat incentiva criminis noxialis*).[222] Leobardus then imparted said grace through his spittle to cure people of sores, fevers, and blindness.[223] As had happened for Senoch, Gregory's intervention restored Leobardus to a path of righteousness. The ascetic completed his journey

218 Because Gregory presumed that bishops were divinely mandated to amend souls, including those of would-be and future saints, he apparently imagined God invested the prelates with a specific sacerdotal grace. See e. g., *Historiae* 10.1; *VSM* 1.11; *GM* 55; *GC* 74.

219 *VP* 20.2. Gregory's remark that Leobardus acted as if he were the "priest of his own soul" (*sacerdos animae suae*) reminds of several Eusebius Gallicanus sermons in which the preachers encourage congregants to practice introspection and to become their own doctors and judges; Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success*, 94-96.

220 *VP* 20.3; trans. by James, *Life*, 128.

221 For Cassian's influence on Gregory in the context of asceticism: Leyser, "'Divine Power Flowed,'" 284, 289-94.

222 *VP* 20.3; trans. by James, *Life*, 129.

223 *VP* 20.3. I am not convinced of the usual interpretation that Leobardus's indiscretion amounted to him abandoning his cell. Gregory first identified the recluse's problem with his cellmates in general terms, calling it a debate about monasticism (*aliquid de illius monacholi litem*). Subsequently Gregory offered an antithetical remark, seemingly intentional, that Leobardus "deserved the power to repress the heat of fevers (*discutiens incommodas febres*) in others, he who extinguished the heat of passions in himself (*qui in se extinxerat incentiva criminis noxialis*)"; trans. by James, *Life*, 129. This passage harkens back to Leobardus's *cogitationem pravam*, and

and at death attained sainthood. It is not insignificant that one of the books Gregory loaned Leobardus for correction was Cassian's *Institutes*. Cassian almost certainly was a primary influence for Gregory's estimation that living holy people, ascetics prominent among them, must combat vices and simultaneously strive towards a condition without sin, a circumstance which itself was not possible without one regularly appealing for the aid of God and His celestial saints.

For those living holy people who avoided the pitfalls of sin and persevered in striving towards righteousness, not only did Gregory imagine that they merited the ability to transmit God's grace in the here and now; furthermore, he believed that their agency, aided by divine grace, won them salvation. For example, he wrote about the apostles and martyrs during their lives:

> While they care for weaknesses, raise the dead, reject the present, long for the future, despise their torturers, and feel no torments, they are of course pressing forth (*contendunt*) to the kingdoms of heaven. Without any doubt, they would not have achieved this result by their own power if they had not been heard by the Lord while they were traveling most directly on the path of righteousness.[224]

Here again, the author acknowledged how holy people could succeed in their mission only with the support of divine aid, but there is no doubt that Gregory's emphasis rested with the individuals' pious exertions.[225] Gregory believed holy people "press forward" (*contendunt*) to heaven, willing the good

leads me to suspect that the recluse's quarrel with his brothers, and Gregory, arose over what the bishop deemed was some sexual transgression.

224 *VSJ* 1; trans. based on Van Dam, *Saints*, 164. This passage refers to Old Testament figures as well as apostles and actual martyrs, but one may presume Gregory thought they operated the same while alive as other living holy people. See also *VP* 7 prologue, trans. by James, *Life*, 43: "There are men of outstanding sanctity, raised on the earth, whom the palm of a perfect beatitude has lifted straight up to heaven."

225 Likewise, Gregory elsewhere wrote: "The saints have sought to receive these things from the divine majesty, continually begging Him that He should enter their heart, that He should make them perfect in their work, that He should speak in their mouths, that their minds might be purged more easily in thought, word and deed and might think in holiness, speak in justice and act with honesty. From which it results that when they submitted themselves to what would be pleasing to God, they obtained the remission of the debt of sin, they were snatched from the contagious filth of vice and were invited, because of their merit, to enter the heavenly kingdom"; *VP* 16 prologue; trans. by James, *Life*, 100. In this passage Gregory's remark that the saints "beg" God to enter their hearts suggests that the writer did not imagine God already dwelling within the individuals. Human agency in the form of the willful act of begging resulted in God enabling them to submit to Him.

along the way; such a person acts, thereby meriting the grace necessary to obtain glory. He envisioned living wonderworkers as distributers of God's grace; he did not perceive them in the manner his friend Fortunatus did, in a strictly Augustinian mode as mere inert vessels through whom an irresistible grace of the indwelling Christ operates.

Sinners

But what of common sinners? Let us recall that for Gregory, sinners, like living holy people, could become like unto martyrs by pursuing virtues and relying on divine assistance. The bishop exhorted sinners, too, to "manfully and firmly place the sign of salvation on your forehead or your chest" and resist vices.[226] Gregory expected common sinners, like perfectly sinless living holy persons, to do their part and strive towards their own salvation.[227] It is fortunate for the sake of unlocking our author's views about sinners that he included himself in his text among the unworthy. Although Gregory imagined that he along with fellow bishops played an essential, and even providential, role in presiding over Christian society, he nonetheless followed an ubiquitous ecclesiastical motif of associating preacher with congregants, author with audience, as fellow sinners.[228]

226 *GM* 106; trans. by Van Dam, *Martyrs*, 133.

227 Like other late ancient preachers, Gregory presumably imagined the majority of his audience of sinners to be laypeople. Caesarius of Arles had higher expectations for clerics and ascetics practicing virtues than laity, but he still provided lists of moral standards that the latter were expected to uphold, which would aid in their quest for salvation. The Eusebius Gallicanus preachers stressed the need to act virtuously over a lifetime, but they, too, were optimistic about laypeople attaining salvation through undergoing the process; Bailey, *Religious Worlds*, 124-25.

228 E. g., *VSM* 1.23, 2.1, 2.60; *VP* 16 prologue, 20.4; standing amongst the goats on Judgment Day: *GM* 2.60. However, not every such equivalence in Gregory's books was for literary effect. For example, one poignant moment during the civil wars of the mid-570s happened in 576 when Prince Merovech had just arrived at Saint Martin's basilica demanding sanctuary. The prince insisted he be allowed to take mass, and although Bishop Gregory was appalled by the belligerent's rebellious conduct towards his own father, King Chilperic, he complied. As an author Gregory explained somewhat defensively that he gave in to Merovech because the latter had threatened to murder some of the prelate's congregants if he was refused communion. Nevertheless, it was with an honest regret that Gregory confessed how he thought his sinful acquiescence had been responsible for the devastation meted on the Touraine thereafter; *Historiae* 5.14. As one who expected spiritually mature individuals above all others to overcome sin by *viriliter et non tepide* signing oneself with the cross, recalling this episode must have stung Gregory mightily. The writer could be a harsh judge, but he was especially severe towards bishops such as himself, on whom he believed the defense of Christian society chiefly rested. E. g., Gregory faulted Bishop Cautinus for trying to elude the plague at Clermont, but not himself, a mere deacon at the time; *Historiae* 4.31; *VSJ* 46a. Gregory was disappointed that several bishops who caused the stylite

Gregory envisioned that he and all sinners needed to strive for the good and request divine aid in the same manner as did living, wonderworking holy people. One expression of this shared requirement for sinner and potential saint is found at *VP* 10 prologue where the author made Saint Friardus into an exemplar for one who repeatedly appealed for God's protection to help him accomplish pious tasks and overcome worldly temptations. In the very sentence prior to that which introduces the holy recluse, Gregory inserted a homiletic appeal on the *vita*'s theme directed to his sinful readers:

> This is why it is always (*semper*) necessary to ask Him [God] (*ille poscendus*), to seek Him (*ille quaerendus*), to invoke Him (*ille invocandus*), so that what the mind conceives to be good may be accomplished with His help. Thus we ought to say ceaselessly 'Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.'[229]

This passage indicates how Gregory envisioned an individual's mind capable of *conceiving* the good. Gregory did not regard the good to be imbedded by God into undeserving persons, as a strict Augustinian would have it. It is extracts such as this, which underline the role of human agency in the form of seeking and invoking the saints while at the same time admitting a need for grace in the form of God's aid, that led Gustavo Vinay to conclude Gregory was basically a "Semi-Pelagian."[230] If use of this inaccurate label no longer applies, one must admit that Vinay was correct to recognize how Gregory adhered to a traditional Gallic outlook which acknowledged a determinant role for human agency, accompanied by divine grace, contributing towards a person's salvation.

Gregory imagined postbaptismal grace to operate for regular, sinful Christians the same way it did for miracle-working living holy people.

Vulfolaic to abandon his pillar did not recognize the holy man's *virtus*, something they should have had the capacity to notice; *Historiae* 8.15; Leyser, "'Divine Power Flowed,'" 284-85. Several bishops towards whom Gregory was particularly harsh include Cautinus of Clermont, Sagittarius of Gap, Salonius of Embrun, and Aegidius of Reims.

Gregory's desire to withhold communion from Merovech obviously was based on his assessment of the prince's current unrepentant conduct; it had nothing to do with his lay status. Lay participation in the Eucharist had begun to decline in the fifth century, but as of the late sixth century laity were not yet reduced to mere spectators, as they would be in the high middle ages; Bailey, *Religious Worlds*, 105-11. For a woman who attended mass daily but did not celebrate at the altar by her own choice: *GC* 64.

229 *VP* 10 prologue; trans. by James, *Life*, 71; includes citation of Psalm 124.8.

230 Vinay, *Gregorio di Tours*, 27-28.

Because the former fell short of perfection, all the more did the bishop stress the importance for sinners to faithfully invoke the saints. For example, he exhorted readers: "…it is necessary for *us* to seek the patronage of the martyrs, so that *we* might be worthy to be helped by their assistance. What *we* are not worthy to obtain by *our own* merits, *we* can receive by their intercessions."[231] This passage indicates how Gregory believed that although sinners were not entirely worthy, they still could receive divine aid. But to do this, they had to initiate the salvific process by proving themselves worthy enough through the act of seeking saintly patronage. Such a reliance on saintly intercessors would endure throughout a sinner's entire life and even beyond that. Therefore, Gregory's depictions of himself as a sinner asking for Saints Martin, Julian, and Andrew to intercede on his behalf at Final Judgment fit squarely with his saint-centered soteriological theology. By expressing this position Gregory was not stumbling through an imperfect assertion of an Augustinian-inspired view about grace.[232] He did not subscribe to Augustine's theory of unmerited grace. Rather, just as he expected living holy persons to strive and deservedly attain perfection in their virtuous endeavors and to request divine assistance throughout their exertions, so too did he require common sinners to assert their agency by always invoking the saints and requesting their support. If one who invoked a saint was indeed deserving, Gregory avowed that Christ guarantees the invoked saint would afford the requested support. For example, he wrote: "[Christ] *ensures* that the martyrs whom he receives after their victory as immortals in the beauty of Paradise will be of assistance when invoked by his people."[233] While Gregory here stressed the point that saintly aid was a certainty, he left off a significant qualifier, that this guarantee depended on the sinner's spiritual condition. For example, he wrote that Christ would hear the prayer of any individual who "has loved righteousness with his whole heart."[234]

Although Christ ensured the availability of saintly power, Gregory did not believe it would suffice for a sinner merely to invoke a saint. The key to effectively meriting divine aid was to do so *faithfully*. Therefore, Gregory asserted that Christ "promises to believers that He will give to those who ask and *who do not doubt the success of their prayers*."[235] It strikes

231 *GM* 106; trans. by Van Dam, *Martyrs*, 133, with my italics.

232 Moreira, *Heaven's Purge*, 78-79, suggests the possibility as one of two explanations for what Gregory intended by his assertion that the saints intercede for sinners deficient in merit.

233 *GM* 106; trans. by Van Dam, *Martyrs*, 133-34, with my italics.

234 *VSJ* 1; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 163.

235 *VP* 2.5; trans. by James, *Life*, 16-17, with my italics.

me that this passage marks the very heart of Gregory's pastoral priority, to cause congregants to invoke the saints *faithfully*.[236] The manner of invocation was paramount; there could be *no doubt*. It was required of one perpetually to *poscere*, *quaerere* and *invocare* with full confidence in a saint's ability. Just as living holy people were expected to strive towards perfection, by which condition they could merit an ability to accumulate and distribute grace, so did common sinners need to condition themselves to pray, weep, give alms, fast, attend vigils, and also to invoke the saints with firm conviction in order to receive divine grace, which in turn would wipe away the blemishes of their sins.[237] As a pastor Gregory intended his writings, and assuredly his sermons, too, to serve as a call for congregants to realize the need to emulate living holy persons and established saints by striving to advance towards a perfect faith.[238] Indeed, immediately on the heels of the aforementioned assurance that Christ supports the requests of those who do not doubt at the end of *VP* 2, our author turned to the very theme of *fides perfecta* in the following *vita*. In *VP* 3 prologue Gregory cited the very biblical passages that promised how the faithful will receive from Christ whatever they request without hesitation and doubt: Matthew 21:21 and Mark 11:23. Upon citing these passages Gregory interpreted them with his usual, distinctive theological twist: specifically, it was the saints, he contended, in whom believers needed to place their unquestioning faith. He wrote: "There is no reason to doubt that the saints can obtain from the Lord whatever they ask, because the faith that is in them is solid and cannot be shaken by the waves of hesitation."[239] For Gregory *fides perfecta* cannot hesitate. As the model for this all-important tenet, our author selected for the single narrative chapter of *VP* 3 the fifth-century Auvergnat holy man, Abbot Abraham. About him Gregory wrote: "…when [Abraham] saw himself perfect in the work of God (*perfectum in Dei opere*), he did not hesitate (*non dubius*) in his faith to search for

236 Cf. Kitchen, "Gregory of Tours," 395.

237 Gregory provided dozens of comments throughout his corpus to the effect that certain visible occurrences left no doubt as to a divine presence, or a saint's merit or involvement; e. g., *GC* 34, 40, 44, 83; *GM* 5, 9, 21, 32, 71, 91, 102; *Historiae* 3.28, 4.37, 4.49, 5.21; *VSJ* 7, 16, 17, 28, 30; *VP* 4.2, 6.7, 7.4, 8.6, 8.10, 8.11, 10.4, 12.3, 16.2, 16.3, 17.4; *VSM* 1.9, 1.28, 2.7, 2.16, 4.11, 4.16.

238 *VP* 2.5.

239 *VP* 3 prologue; trans. by James, *Life*, 18. As was typical of Gregory's prologues in the *VP* the author used a typological approach. In *VP* 3 the Old Testament patriarch Abraham, who faithfully wandered to the Holy Land, becomes the *typus* for *fides* while the fifth-century abbot Abraham, who relocated from the Euphrates to Gaul, fulfills the role of his namesake. On Abraham, see Kitchen, "Gregory of Tours," 405-06.

what he was confident (*confisus*) of obtaining by a holy life, and through him [God] deigned to work miracles…"[240] One witnesses in this anecdote how Abbot Abraham confidently exhibited a resolute faith and thereby deservedly obtained from God an ability to perform miracles. All well and good for that future saint, but what could a common sinner hope to achieve by emulating such behavior? Elsewhere in the *Miracula*, Gregory depicted an "everyperson" displaying a similarly determined faith and thereby meriting a divine benefit. When a woman with disabled hands apparently became inspired after reading Saint Medard of Noyon's *vita*, she piously ventured to the confessor's tomb.[241] There she joined others in celebrating vigils "with complete faith" (*fide integra*). Furthermore, she confidently (*confisa*) expected the saint – Medard was famous for liberating captive unfortunates from chains – to repair her swollen hands. Indeed, during mass, the nerves of her hands loosened, and so, fully healed, the woman advanced to the altar where she partook of "the grace of a blessing" (*gratiam benedictionis*).[242] In this anecdote Gregory presented the kind of this-worldly boon he wished to convince readers to anticipate if they followed the woman's example and adopted a *fides integra* and confidently (*confisa*) sought the grace-endowed powers of a saint.[243] If, as it seems, Gregory expected readers to assume this woman had read (or listened to) the *vita Medardi* and had come away from that text feeling certain that a saint who could loosen chains assuredly would loosen nerves, then her confident demeanor and action will have provided a model for how our author intended readers to respond to the many stories about the broad availability and guaranteed efficacy of saintly *virtutes* in his own books.

Another edificatory example of a seemingly common sinner displaying a confident faith comes from Gregory's prose paraphrase for one of Paulinus of Périgueux's poems about Saint Martin's miracles.[244] A man whose lands were being ravaged by a recurrent hail storm procured a lump of candle wax from the saint's basilica and piously set it in his fields, after which he received

240 *VP* 3 prologue; trans. by James, *Life*, 18.

241 Gregory mentioned that the woman sought out Saint Medard's *virtutes* after the *vita Medardi* was written. He did not explicitly remark that the woman read the *vita*.

242 *GC* 93; trans. by Van Dam, *Confessors*, 97.

243 Gregory himself saw the accumulation of shattered chains at Saint Medard's basilica, kept there *in testimonium virtutis eius*; *Historiae* 4.19.

244 At *VSM* 1.2 Gregory paraphrased eleven poems from Paulinus of Périgueux's sixth book of the *Vita Martini*. The poems in this book versify posthumous miracles of Saint Martin which Bishop Perpetuus of Tours originally put down in prose.

divine protection from the tempest.[245] In his prose rewrite of the tale, Gregory converted Paulinus's protagonist from a "certain confident man" (*quidam confidens*) to a "certain man full of faith" (*quidam plenus fidei*) who "thirsted for the saint's grace" (*gratiam sancti sitiens*). He further added that when the individual placed the relic in his fields, he did so confidently (*confisus*).[246] Both of Gregory's additions, *plenus fidei* and *confisus*, represent the manner our author wanted readers to emulate whenever they sought out a saint's aid and invoked one. Another of Gregory's paraphrases that exhibits a similar adjustment to a protagonist derives from Prudentius's *Apotheosis*. In that poet's triumphal account, an imperial guard is revealed to be a Christian whose mere presence causes a pagan sacrificial ceremony conducted before Emperor Diocletian to falter, which results in many others converting to the faith.[247] Among Gregory's changes to the story are the additions of two speeches inserted into the mouths of Diocletian and the guard. The speeches serve to emphasize a contrast between alarmed pagan emperor and bold Christian. After narrating how the pagan officiant fell dead, Gregory caused a worried Diocletian to call out: "Whose forehead has been marked with the sign of the chrism and who worships the wood of the cross?"[248] Whereas Prudentius had depicted the guard simply being apprehended and thereafter confessing his faith, Gregory caused the character to respond proactively and unflinchingly. He wrote: "One of the emperor's bodyguards came forward and threw his weapons on the ground, and said, 'I am the one whose God is Christ and who has been washed by baptism and redeemed by the cross. *I have always invoked his name* while your priests were offering to the demons these [animals].'"[249] Here Gregory turned Prudentius's passive guard into a defiant and assertive advocate for the faith. The individual's remark that he "always" (*semper*) invoked Christ's name exemplifies Gregory's requirement that Christians must persistently invoke the deity and His saints. The guard's confident posture and Diocletian's reference to one marking the forehead with the sign of the cross both remind of Gregory's admonition at *GM* 106

245 Paulinus of Périgueux, *Vita Martini* 6.325-36. Gregory's biggest change to Paulinus's account was to drastically reduce the poet's elaborate portrayal of animated tree branches batting away hailstones into a mere mention of a *tempestas saevissima*.

246 *VSM* 1.2.

247 *GM* 40, an adaptation of Prudentius, *Apotheosis* 449-502. Gregory's cosmetic changes included removing the pagan deities' names along with the gory details of the ritual proceedings. For a consideration of Gregory's changes to the poem in order to accommodate his theme of bishops and kings: Pizarro, "Gregory of Tours," 352-54.

248 *GM* 40; trans. by Van Dam, *Martyrs*, 62.

249 *GM* 40; trans. by Van Dam, *Martyrs*, 62, with my italics.

for readers to *viriliter et non tepide* mark their foreheads or chests with the sign of salvation in order to be considered like a martyr. In this instance the protagonist becomes a martyr literally!

A final anecdote that depicts a common sinner expressing a confident faith involves Gregory himself. One recalls from chapter 1 that when Gregory as a child around age eleven fell deathly ill of a fever, it seemed he would die. Decades later Gregory as author presented Armentaria expressing sadness over the seemingly assured upcoming loss of her *dulcissimus natus*. Gregory contrasted this image of grief-stricken mother with a portrayal of himself as buoyant. The child spoke: "Please don't be sad, but send me to the tomb of the blessed bishop Illidius, for I believe and I trust that his virtue will find happiness for you and health for me."[250] The boy's unambiguous assurance to Armentaria that the saint would heal him exemplifies a faith confident in its ability to "move mountains." Saint Illidius provided his guaranteed holy aid to this sinner who had displayed an unquestioning faith. It was Gregory's intention to overwhelm his literary audience's senses with a preponderance of miracle stories of this sort. In so doing he hoped to overturn people's minds, some overly secure and others skeptical, so that they might acknowledge with *fides integra* the truths contained in Matthew 21:21 and Mark 11:23, the reality of which his countless examples confirmed. Sinners can be a stubborn lot.[251]

One of Gregory's most telling considerations of the plight of common sinners appears not in the *Miracula* but in the condensed treatment of the Babylonian Captivity located in the writer's typologically charged *Historiae* 1.[252] After briefly describing the captivity of the Jews and their liberation under Zerubbabel Gregory wrote:

> In my opinion this captivity is a type (*typus*) of the enslavement into which the soul of a sinner is led, and indeed such a soul will be carried off into fearful exile unless some Zerubbabel, that is Christ Himself, can rescue it. … May He then build for Himself a temple within us, in which He may deign to dwell… May he grant a successful outcome to our good will, for 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.'[253]

250 *VP* 2.2; trans. by James, *Life*, 14.

251 Goffart, *Narrators*, 233, observed about the inhabitants of Merovingian Gaul: "The mass of perdition was tenacious and ever reluctant to change."

252 Heinzelmann, "Works of Gregory," 296, characterizes *Historiae* 1 as "a kind of spiritual guide for the understanding of the Christian mysteries." See also Pietri, *La ville de Tours*, 759-62.

253 *Historiae* 1.15; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 79.

Obviously enough, Gregory regarded the historical captivity as a type for human captivity in sin. Likewise, Zerubbabel is a type for Christ and the liberation is a type for salvation.[254] In addition to this interpretation, what Benjamin Wheaton has expertly identified in this passage is how Gregory acknowledged human agency in willing the good. Wheaton writes:

> This excerpt contains the key phrase *bonae etiam voluntate nostrae ipse salubrae effectu indulgeat*. First, the goodness of the human will is clearly its own, not granted to it by God's grace. Second, God needs to grant to that good will a wholesome effect; in other words, grace is necessary to free the soul from slavery to sin. It seems that Gregory was more inclined towards the traditional Gallic position of allowing more space for the freedom of the will than the Augustinian position permitted. In short, Gregory sided more with Cassian than Caesarius.[255]

Wheaton's analysis of *Historiae* 1.15 confirms Gregory's valuation of human agency hinted at through his many remarks scattered across the *Miracula*, including those associated with his depictions of living holy people striving towards perfection and meriting grace, which enabled them to perform miracles and ultimately advance to heaven. Gregory believed all humans of their own volition capable of striving for the good. Those who do merit God's assistance, which given in the form of grace, expiates sin, provides physical heath, and enables salvation itself.

Conclusion

The death of Bishop Eufronius occasioned Gregory becoming bishop of Tours, which in turn led to the prelate doing all he could to associate himself with that city's long-established patron, Saint Martin. Gregory began updating Martin's miracles to fulfill a vow and likely also to satisfy an already welling desire to hail saintly *virtutes* in written form. His composition of *VSM* 1 unleashed the hagiographer within and resulted in a torrent of works that attest to the reality of holy powers available through a wide array of saints' tombs and relics and also through the saints' living disciples, many of whom were journeying along righteous paths to become saints themselves. But coincident with his earliest years of writing, Gregory unexpectedly had to

254 Heinzelmann, "Works of Gregory," 129.
255 Wheaton, "Venantius Fortunatus," 203.

navigate the members of his new diocese through four years of one of the worst cases of civil warfare Merovingian Gaul would ever experience. The depredations that befell his congregants and the sudden demise of King Sigibert likely prompted Gregory to decide to write a history.

Whether writing material for the books in which he specifically extolled the saints or those that addressed the condition of the visible world with its mix of *virtutes sanctorum et strages gentium*, Gregory infused his literary corpus with messages that advanced his own distinctive pastoral agenda. Some of the text's anecdotes derived from his own sermons while others were lifted from others' homiletic pieces and moralistic tales. The underlying moral tenor for all of Gregory's writings convey the same central theme, which undoubtedly is identical to what he preached from the pulpit: Christians must persistently and confidently seek, and faithfully invoke, Christ and His saints. Gregory's distinctive, saint-centered program for pastoral care reflected the practical solutions his family had raised him to embrace. The consistent soteriological theology he exhibited was the product of a *studium ad ecclesiastica scripta* that retained, probably consciously to some extent, a traditional Gallic interpretation on grace and agency while rejecting an Augustinian one.[256] Gregory believed that just as true martyrs earned their heavenly crowns, so did living holy people who "martyred" themselves by rejecting earthly passions and pleasures thereby prove themselves deserving of divine support, achieve perfection in the pursuit of various virtues, and merit an ability to work miracles while still alive in the world. Those among these same individuals who managed to stay perfect in God's works unto death merited salvation. The bishop expected regular sinners to strive to deserve grace in the same way that aspiring saints did. He taught that they too must adopt an unwavering, perfect faith. It was vital that sinners learn to master the technique of invoking saintly aid confidently and without hesitation or doubt.

256 Gregory's contemporary, Fortunatus, was familiar with the Augustinian Prosper of Aquitaine's criticisms of Cassian, and Fortunatus even appeared at one point in his exegetical work on the *pater noster* to challenge Cassian's idea on human *bona voluntas*; Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 10.1.36-37; Wheaton, "Venantius Fortunatus," 180-184. Another sixth-century source indicative of a continued consciousness of the distinction between the Augustinian-Roman and Gallic positions on grace and free will is a letter dated to 557 from Pope Pelagius I to King Childebert I. The pope's epistle addressed several matters of orthodox faith including the Trinity, Christology, and grace. Pelagius presented the king with a strident Augustinian stance on grace and salvation; Pelagius I, "Letter 7," ed. Gassò and Batlle, 24-25, following Wheaton, "Venantius Fortunatus," 224-226. For more on the Roman and Gallic positions: ibid., 208-28.

Gregory believed that reading and listening to miracle stories was part of the edificatory process of helping people develop an unquestioning faith in saintly powers.[257] To best meet this pastoral imperative Gregory opted to edify congregants and readers by sharing many stories which depict this-worldly successes awarded to individuals who faithfully put their trust in the saints. But he also sometimes narrated tales of this-worldly consequences incurred by people who disregarded and disparaged the saints. He detailed how some individuals experienced physical misfortunes after they mocked and offended holy patrons and abused the latter's churches, disciples and dependents. A lot of our author's anecdotes include images of death; Gregory recorded the this-worldly demises of saints, fellow ecclesiastics, pious religious laypersons, kings, courtiers, royal officials and many, many reprobates. He composed these stories not simply because he enjoyed chronicling salvific and retributive miracles, although he obviously did, but to edify with the intent of ushering souls to heaven.[258] Part II of this book will focus closely on the soteriological and eschatological implications of such images which fill the pages of Gregory's corpus. It will address not only the role he imagined saints played in the eschaton but also how he "read" the visible images of death and pondered the otherworldly fates of many people whose actions he highlighted in his books.

257 For an argument that Gregory's sense of edification followed a patristic model: Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 172-81.

258 Keely, "Early Medieval Narrative," 131: "For Gregory, who associated himself with the tradition of the chroniclers, all history is salvation history."

Part II

Afterlife

4. Discerning the Denizens of Heaven and Hell

By the time he became a bishop Gregory of Tours had become accomplished at casting his perceptive physical eyes upon a variety of visible phenomena to uncover their invisible meaning. The this-worldly occurrences on which he focused included irregular celestial events, bizarre natural incidents pertaining to weather, flora and fauna, and perhaps especially the onset of people's maladies along with their disappearances. To Gregory all of these spectacles potentially constituted evidence of the divine mood or the unseen operations of God and His saints. Another earthly experience on which Gregory fixated an intensive gaze was death. Like the Apostle Paul, the bishop generally perceived death as the price for human sin.[1] With the author of Revelation he distinguished physical death, to which all humans are subject, from the eternal penalty of second death.[2] As was covered in Part I of this book, helping readers to avoid the latter fate was a principal reason why Gregory began to write. This chapter will analyze how Gregory deduced the otherworldly whereabouts of many deceased souls and communicated his knowledge to readers.[3] It will briefly consider his practice, common enough among

1 E. g., Romans 7: 7-25.

2 Revelation 2:11; 20:6, 14-15; 21:8.

3 Understanding Gregory's methods for discerning the location of dead people's souls and communicating this information to readers involves a thorough examination of the author's vocabulary pertaining to death and afterlife. The first modern scholar to realize Gregory used certain words to distinguish between the deaths of "righteous" and "villainous" people was Martin Heinzelmann. For example, he noted how the writer juxtaposed two terms in the *capitula* of the *Historiae*, *de obitu* and *de interitu*, to comment on people's afterlife prospects. Realizing that Gregory used *de interitu* in reference to "villains" who are depicted dying in a chapter's narrative, Heinzelmann concluded that the author intended the term to connote the deceased's eternal condemnation. He further proposed that by use of *de obitu* in reference to the demise of "goodly" persons, Gregory informed readers that such people's souls were not unconditionally damned; Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 138, n. 94. See also ibid., 138-9 nn. 96-97. While such cursory remarks from Heinzelmann's footnotes constitute the key to unlocking Gregory's thoughts about souls' afterlife conditions, they leave many items unanswered. For example, why did Gregory reference the deaths of King Chlodomer's seemingly innocent sons with *De interitu* in the *capitulum* for *Historiae* 3.18? Did he really think these young murder victims were "villainous," or deserved damnation? And if Theudebald was a *malus* king, did Gregory really wish to convey that his soul was not necessarily damned, as per the nonjudgmental *De obitu* in the *capitulum* of *Historiae* 4.9? Understanding accurately and fully the extent of Gregory's

late ancient hagiographers, of narrating about celestial ascensions of many deceased saints and other righteous souls. More focus will be given to Gregory's proclivity to detect individuals' eternal condemnation and the methods used to pass that information along to readers, a practice that was exceedingly rare among late ancient writers. In the process of revealing how Gregory discerned people's fates, the chapter will continue to bring to light particular aspects of our author's soteriological and pastoral objectives.

The Saved

In the course of depicting many saints performing miracles in order to convince readers of the broad availability of holy *virtutes* across society, Gregory frequently remarked about saints' souls progressing to, or occupying a place in, paradise. His process for reasoning how a holy soul resided in heaven was similar to that by which he established whether a deceased person was in fact a saint; he relied on postmortem miracles to demonstrate the unseen truth of a dead individual's status in the hereafter. For example, about the deceased Bishop Theomastus of Poitiers, he assessed that "the power coming from his tomb proves that he lives in Paradise."[4] This sentence indicates how Gregory adhered to the common belief that although miracles happened proximate to the saints' earth-bound tombs or relics, the holy souls who caused them directed their powers from a heavenly abode, to which they proceeded immediately upon their decease.

Gregory's written accounts for the ascent of holy people's souls to heaven vary between pithy remarks and elaborate depictions. On the shorter side, he recorded how his great-uncle, Nicetius of Lyons, "sent forth his blessed spirit to the heavens," while his friend from Poitiers, Queen Radegund, "was retrieved from the world and quartered in heaven."[5] Longer depictions evince how Gregory took an especial delight in tailoring some declarations of saintly ascensions. For example, about his personal patron, the decapitated

systematic approach to commenting on the fates of the dead requires a much deeper dive than has been attempted thus far. Further complicating matters is the fact that our author rarely provided authorial commentary. Instead he frequently communicated messages and lessons through images, gestures, props, and the direct discourse of characters in the text. See Pizarro, *Rhetoric of the Scene*.

4 *GC* 52; trans. by Van Dam, *Confessors*, 60.

5 Nicetius: *GC* 60: *beatum spiritum praemisit ad caelos*; Radegund: *GC* 103: *adsumptam a mundo, collocatam in caelo*.

martyr Julian, he explained: "The glorious martyr was then, if I may say so, divided into three parts. For his head was brought to Vienne, his body was buried at Brioude, but his blessed soul was received by Christ the maker."[6] A confessor whose death apparently warranted extended comment was Portianus, "whom the Lord not only saved from the burden of worldly toil, but whom He also ennobled with great virtues and established in eternal rest after the agitations and afflictions of the world, placing him in the midst of the choirs of angels, from which the prince of this world has been excluded."[7] At his most imaginative Gregory fancied invisible angles and demons converging upon the souls of the meritorious as they neared death. For example, he inserted into *VSM* 1 an apocryphal story which detailed that, while angels were escorting Saint Martin's soul to heaven, the Devil and his *iniqui angeli* momentarily stalled the ascent.[8] A more contemporaneous episode divulges how a demon in possession of an energumen present at a nun's deathbed identified a second invisible being with whom the nun had been conversing prior to death as none other than the Archangel Michael. Gregory commented that this demon had a fit because his master, the Devil, had been denied the opportunity for his minions to examine the soul before the angel spirited her to heaven.[9] Gregory assuredly intended these tales to entertain, while at the same time he meant them to tweak readers with a modicum of anxiety about their own afterlife prospects. For example, after the tale of Martin's *post mortem* brush with the demonic host, the author queried: "What therefore will happen to us sinners, if this wicked faction wished to harm such a bishop?"[10] While Gregory here did his part to rhetorically unsettle sinful readers, in no way did he actually imagine that Martin and his fellow saints had anything to fear during their celestial ascents. After all, about the advance of the infernal gang towards Martin's soul he remarked that as soon as the Devil realized there was "nothing

6 *VSJ* 1; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 164.

7 *VP* 5 prologue; trans. by James, *Life*, 28. Gregory envisioned Portianus's progression from slave to free abbot to saint fulfilling several biblical passages, most notably Matthew 20:16. Portianus's very life actualized movement from captivity in sin to the liberty of salvation; Kitchen, "Gregory of Tours," 407-08.

8 *VSM* 1.4.

9 *Historiae* 6.29. The nun, Disciola, was a sister at Radegund's convent at Poitiers. She also was the niece of Gregory's close acquaintance, Bishop Salvius of Albi, whom Gregory acknowledged as a saint following his decease. On psychopomps: Caseau, "Crossing the Impenetrable Frontier."

10 *VSM* 1.4; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 206. For the idea that Gregory reflected a growing late ancient sense of anxiety regarding the soul's passage after death: Brown, *Ransom of the Soul*, 162-64. On the seventh-century "triumph" of the concept that angels and demons gather around the deathbeds of all: Brown, "*Gloriosus Obitus,*" 299-300.

of himself" in the saint – i. e., the deceased Martin was without sin – the fiend left bewildered.[11] According to Gregory's soteriology, a soul's sinless state at death guaranteed one's salvation. For example, about the process of living holy people transitioning into dead saints he wrote: "There are men of outstanding sanctity, raised on earth, whom the palm of a perfect beatitude has lifted straight to heaven. … They made themselves their own persecutors, destroying the vices in themselves, and they triumph like proven martyrs, having completed the course of their legitimate combat."[12] While Gregory readily acknowledged that the Devil might pose a real danger for humans who still lived, for example, by causing holy people who otherwise had ridded themselves of vices to become prideful, he apparently believed that the fallen angel was powerless versus sin-free souls in the afterlife, even at the moment when such a soul was journeying to paradise.[13]

More representative of our author's impressions of saints traveling to heaven are celebratory images of angelic pageantry which accompanied such occasions. For example, about Martin's ascension he declared:

> Oh, blessed man! At [the moment of] his death a crowd of saints was singing, a chorus of angels was dancing, an army of all the celestial powers was in attendance, the devil was disordered in his rashness, the church was strengthened by his power, and bishops were honored by his revelation. [The archangel] Michael received him among the angels, Mary welcomed him with a chorus of virgins, and Paradise holds him in happiness among the saints.[14]

Gregory provided a similarly triumphant image for Saint Lupicinus's ascent, opting in this case to present it through the mouth of the dying recluse. Lupicinus prophetically remarked: "It is [the Lord] who has sent His angel to recall me from this worldly dwelling, and who has promised to lead me to eternal rest, so that having become a colleague of His friends I should be worthy to be admitted into His kingdom."[15] Gregory interpreted Lupicinus's foreknowledge of his own salvation as a divine reward provided by virtue of the spiritual merit the holy man had amassed while he lived. He similarly reasoned that when the holy recluse Leobardus sent away a servant so the

11 Cf. John 14:30, for Christ's remark that the Devil had no hold over him.

12 *VP* 7 prologue; trans. by James, *Life*, 43.

13 One may note that Gregory did not depict angels and demons actually vying against one another for souls.

14 *VSM* 1.5; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 207.

15 *VP* 13.2; trans. by James, *Life*, 87.

latter would not witness his death, the action "revealed" (*manifestum est*) how angels had retrieved his soul.[16]

The previous anecdotes attest how Gregory counted on this-worldly evidence to help him establish that certain deceased persons' souls transited to heaven. Among the signs he found useful in verifying heavenly ascents were pleasing visible and aural phenomena suggestive of an angelic presence and/or a celestial aperture. For example, based on the testimony of a *quidam religiosus* who claimed he saw the "heavens open" (*caelos se apertos*) on the day of Bishop Gregory of Langres' funeral, Gregory accepted that the event was an angelic act which left "no doubt" (*nec enim ambigitur*) that the saint was "admitted to the heavenly assemblies."[17] Similarly, the presence of a "sweet odor" (*odore suavitatis*) which filled Friardus's cell after his demise, coupled with a report that the recluse's cell shook on the occasion of his expiration, sufficed for the writer to acknowledge without doubt (*unde indubitatum est*) that angels perfumed the locale in recognition of the confessor's merit.[18] Gregory further interpreted the paradisiacal smell to reveal that Friardus's soul "was received in heaven by Christ."[19] Another form of visual and olfactory evidence Gregory regarded as suggestive of *post mortem* ascension is the pure appearance of a corpse itself, along with fragrant smells emitting from it. For example, he reasoned that an absence of deterioration for the long-entombed body of Bishop Valerius of Saint-Lizier, coupled with an *odor suavitatis* wafting from the tomb, left no doubt (*non dubitaretur*) that the dead man was a saint (*Dei amicum*).[20] Similarly, the vivacious, rosy-red cheeks and lily-white body of the corpse of Gregory's great-grandfather, the Bishop of Langres, who had been dead seven years, prompted the author to comment: "one would have said that he was already prepared for the glory of the future resurrection."[21] This passage reveals how Gregory not only interpreted the visible evidence of a pristine corpse to assert a relative's sanctity, he also used it to argue for the reality of bodily resurrection, a doctrine which continued to meet some opposition even within orthodox Christian circles at the end of the sixth century.[22]

16 *VP* 20.4. God forewarned of death for Gregory's uncle Gallus three days prior to his demise; *VP* 6.7.

17 *VP* 7.4; trans. by James, *Life*, 46.

18 *VP* 10.4.

19 *VP* 10.4; trans. by James, *Life*, 76.

20 *GC* 83.

21 *VP* 7.3; trans. by James, *Life*, 45.

22 On resistance to the doctrine of bodily resurrection as evidenced in the writings of Gregory of Tours and Pope Gregory I: McCready, *Signs of Sanctity*, 207-11. Gregory credited the glorious

Another kind of evidence Gregory relied on to recognize the otherworldly status for souls of deceased righteous individuals was dreams and visions. Indeed, he may have regarded the testimony drawn from visionary encounters as a form of proof superior to the simple appearance of corpses.[23] For example, on the one hand, when Gregory and fellow clerics at Clermont gazed upon the long dead remains of a girl after her sarcophagus inadvertently had been broken open, despite being amazed to witness a pristine face and limbs and fresh white robes, they nevertheless left the well-preserved body exposed to the elements.[24] On the other hand, when the same girl showed herself in a dream to an aristocratic woman and then healed the matron of blindness after the latter placed a new top on the deceased's sarcophagus, news of the apparition led the clerics to realize "without doubt" (*non ambigitur*) that the entombed female was in fact a saint. Similarly, a vision once enlightened two abbots about the remains of a certain Eutropis, whose corpse was being transferred into a newly built church. When the pair examined the body and noticed a wound where an axe had struck Eutropis's head, they suspected nothing about the person's merit. Then Eutropis appeared to the abbots in dreams and explained how he had died while receiving the scar. By virtue of the dream visitations "it became known to the people" (*innotuit populis*) that Eutropis was actually a heaven-dwelling martyr.[25] These tales reflect our author's common literary tactic of parading a succession of evidentiary clues pertaining to a person's demise before readers' eyes and thereby leading them towards adopting a conclusion about an individual's eternal fate.[26]

appearance of his great-grandfather's corpse to the holy bishop having exceled at rejecting lust while he lived. He remarked that maintaining *corporis et cordis integritas* contributed to one receiving eternal life; *VP* 7.4. Likewise, Gregory pointed out that the corpse of the chaste and heaven-bound nun Disciola exhibited a snowy-white look to it days after her death; *Historiae* 6.29. The body and clothes of Bishop Felix of Bourges appeared intact twelve years after that individual's demise; *GC* 100.

23 One reason Gregory might have thought well-preserved corpses did not automatically indicate sanctity is that, as he well knew, it was common for the dead to be spiced and even embalmed. On efforts in Gaul to preserve bodies: Effros, *Caring for Body*, 70-75.

24 *GC* 34.

25 *GM* 55.

26 Compare with the recent contribution of Peter Phillip Jones, who analyzes the historian's use of several literary devices that bring "the readers' viewpoint into closer alignment with Gregory's own worldview through subtle persuasion"; Jones, "Gregory of Tours' Poetics," 5. Jones reveals that whenever Gregory depicted an event spanning multiple chapters he sometimes withheld evidence from readers to keep them in suspense and build their expectations. Keeping readers partially in the dark served to reflect the limited knowledge the narrator himself possessed when he pondered the meaning of said event back when it actually happened. The literary devices Gregory used as he guided the audience towards a final valuable lesson include repetition,

Visionaries and Heaven

About all the world's martyrs and confessors, Gregory figured that because their physical remains obviously remained behind on earth, only their souls proceeded to heaven.[27] From paradise they extended their celestial powers to aid those on earth who merited their support.[28] Like so much else pertaining to the unseen side of things, Gregory welcomed the input of spiritually mature individuals to help him further understand heavenly proceedings.[29] One of the bishop's sources for knowledge about what transpired in paradise was a holy abbot named Brachio of Menat. Brachio related to his bishop, Avitus of Clermont, how God forewarned him of his upcoming death through a dream.[30] According to Brachio, he was lifted

repeated phrases, and direct discourse. By feeding readers bits of information Gregory invited them to interpret signs and move from initial suspicion towards eventual understanding. The writer encouraged the audience to mimic the process by which he earlier deliberated on the roles of various participants in an event in real time, finally arriving at some conclusion about the moral implications which underlay the action. The sample case for Jones's study is the lasting feud between the partisans of two citizens of Tours covered at *Historiae* 7.22 and 9.19. Gregory narrated how the two parties perpetuated a series of murderous outbursts. Breaking the action were two instances when the bishop himself intervened to mediate, but to no avail. The ultimate moral lesson to be learned was that people should not reject churchmen's efforts to secure peace. Neither of the principals in this feud, Sichar and Chramnesind, learned the lesson. Only in the latter half of *Historiae* 9.19 did Gregory allow readers to realize that Sichar, heretofore presented as a suspect but also a possible victim, was to be identified as the culprit who secretly instigated the violence. Sichar's guilt becomes apparent only after he is killed; ibid., 7-22. Jones characterizes Gregory as possessing a "murder mystery aesthetic"; ibid., 21.

27 The only individuals who Gregory acknowledged to dwell in paradise with their souls already joined to their glorified corporeal bodies were Christ and the Virgin Mary. Christ: *Historiae* 1.24. Gregory wrote that Christ appeared before the apostles, accompanied by angels, gathered Mary's soul, and entrusted it to Michael. The Lord then returned to the apostles, carried off Mary's corpse in a cloud, and reunited it with her soul in heaven; *GM* 4. Gregory probably believed Enoch the Just also bodily went to heaven. He wrote that Enoch was *adsumptus* by the Lord and cited Genesis 5:24 that Enoch "walked with God." More explicit than Gregory was Avitus of Vienne, who wrote that both Enoch and Elisha went bodily to heaven; Avitus of Vienne, *De spiritualis historiae gestis* 4.178-86. Fortunatus counted Enoch and Elisha among the heavenly nobility but elsewhere remarked that both are still awaiting death; Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmina* 8.26.129-35, 9.2.39-40.

28 Gregory characterized healings at Saint Baudilius's tomb as a *caeleste remedium*; *GM* 77. Saint Abraham cured fevers with *medicinae caelestis praecidio*; *VP* 3.1. Dust from Saint Martin's tomb is a *purgatorium caeleste*; *VSM* 2.60.

29 On visions of afterlife in Gaul: Moreira, *Dreams, Visions*, 148-68.

30 *VP* 12.3. Avitus may have been Gregory's source for the entire of Brachio's life, which Gregory detailed at *VP* 12. Another Auvergnat holy man for whose life Avitus proved the source was a recluse named Caluppa; *VP* 11.3. Bishop Avitus ordained Caluppa as deacon and priest. Gregory once accompanied Avitus to the monastery of Méallat where they visited the recluse in his cell

to heaven where he saw the Lord flanked by winged seraphim and listened to Isaiah prophesying from a large tome.[31] Another reliable witness to the cosmic domain was the visionary abbot, Venantius of Bourges, who required no dream to inform him of celestial happenings. By virtue of his keen ears and perceptive eyes, this abbot realized one Sunday that a mass was being conducted in the hereafter; he even identified the very moment when angels were singing the Sanctus.[32]

Gregory derived his most detailed evidence about heaven and its occupants from a vision which a personal acquaintance, Bishop Salvius of Albi, related directly to him.[33] According to Salvius, during the days when he was a recluse he actually expired. While fellow monks and his own pious mother prepared the corpse for burial and set it on a bier, two angels in the meantime brought his soul to uppermost heaven, above the sun, the moon, the clouds and stars. After passing through a brilliantly shining gate, the abbot and his escort entered an enormous building paved with golden and silver floors. There Salvius viewed a seemingly endless multitude of people who exhibited no sex. He was greeted by heaven's martyrs and confessors who dressed variously, some in clerical garb and others in ordinary clothes. From a cloud which manufactured its own light and glowed more brilliantly than the others, the Voice of God spoke. Additionally, an "aroma of intoxicating sweetness" (*odor nimiae suavitatis*) replenished the recluse, enabling him to require no sustenance for four days afterwards. Before this nourishment wore off, however, God Himself informed Salvius that he would have to return to earth where he would become a bishop. When the recluse fretted that he might not deserve to return to paradise, the divinity assured that he would, and then the angels returned the holy man's soul to its revivified body.[34] Gregory undoubtedly intended his audience to take the details of heaven's topography which Salvius had imparted to him literally. The author remarked in the *Historiae* that he was worried some readers would not believe the account of his friend's heavenly visitation. To allay

and discussed cures for various illnesses. Another of the writer's fast friends, Abbot Aredius of Limoges, was Gregory's source for tales about the former's mentor, Bishop Nicetius of Trier; *VP* 17 prologue. Aredius's stories included a tale about how Nicetius dreamed he saw a tower that reached to heaven around which angels flew; *VP* 17.5. For more on Nicetius's dream see below, pp. 204-05. On Gregory and Aredius's shared devotion for Martin and Julian, along with his visits to the bishop and role as an informant; Van Dam, *Saints*, 162-63, 182 n. 19.

31 Brachio died in 576; *Historiae* 5.12.

32 *VP* 16.2.

33 *Historiae* 7.1.

34 On Salvius's vision of heaven: Carozzi, *Le Voyage de l'Âme*, 62; Moreira, *Dreams, Visions*, 152-53.

these suspicions, he vouched with God as witness that the blessed bishop had told him the tale. After this Gregory related how God rewarded Salvius by revealing the moment of death in advance so he could prepare himself for the heavenly ascension he had been guaranteed. If Gregory himself ever experienced a visitation to heaven via dream or reality, he did not divulge this in writing. He did, however, quite poetically fancy that in heaven his own favorite patron saints, Julian and Martin, danced alongside the Apostle John (*in caelo trepudiat*).[35]

Communicating Salvation: *Migrare* and *Transire*

As mentioned above, Gregory widely varied his remarks about saints ascending to heaven. But because he alluded to many dozens of saints' deaths and celestial ascensions throughout the enormous corpus, he also opted to employ a specific vocabulary befitting the respect he felt was their due to succinctly intimate heavenly ascents. Two words he reserved for the expiration of saints and other righteous souls are *migrare* and *transire*. So methodical was our author in deploying these words, it seems necessary to conclude that he intended them to convey to readers his estimation of a heavenly afterlife for each individual to whose death he applied the terms.

Migrare and *transire* both translate as "to pass" or "to cross over." When used in the context of death, they indicate something more than mere physical death; they suggest *post mortem* movement.[36] Both words apparently served in common late ancient parlance to convey a respectful or consolatory tone.[37] Beyond merely being polite, however, Gregory seems to have deployed

35 *VSJ* 50. Fortunatus similarly imagined heaven's occupants dancing to the psalms; Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 8.3.1-4. A nun in Radegund's convent at Poitiers had a vision in which Christ showed her to the Well of Living Water. The woman drank from the spring and was dressed in a regal gown. Following the vision, the nun caused herself to be fully shut up in a cell; *Historiae* 6.29; Carozzi, *Le Voyage de l'Âme*, 62-63. Also on heaven: *VP* 12.3 and *VP* 13 prologue.

36 The only instance of *migrare* used in a mundane sense in Gregory's text is from his reproduction of the Treaty of Andelot; *Historiae* 9.20. The writer more often used *transire* to express this-worldly crossings, as when the Israelites *transiit* the Red Sea and the Vandals sailed across the Mediterranean; *Historiae* 1.10, 2.2.

37 E. g., Bishop Remigius of Reims opened a consolatory letter to Clovis by expressing his grief on the occasion of the king's sister "passing" (*transiit*); *Epistulae Austrasicae* 1. Other instances of such polite usage appear in the Treaty of Andelot. For example, when diplomats for Kings Guntram and Childebert II were determining what would transpire in the hypothetical event that the younger ruler should expire, rather than frankly write "if Childebert should die," they more mindfully penned: "if it should happen that the lord Childebert should migrate from this light"; *Historiae* 9.20. The same treaty similarly refers to the actual death of Guntram's father

migrare and *transire* to cause readers to conjure in their minds an image of a soul "passing" to the hereafter. For example, he reported that the saintly Bishop Salvius of Albi used to exhort his flock to behave appropriately so that "if God should wish you to migrate from this world, you can enter not into judgment but into rest."[38] By entering *in iudicium*, Gregory here meant that a soul would incur damnation, and by *in requiem* that it would attain salvation. This statement, which Gregory caused to come from the mouth of the Gallic contemporary he probably felt was most familiar with otherworldly mysteries, attests how our author was capable of imagining one "migrating" to either heaven or hell. An analysis of all his uses of *migrare* in the context of death, however, reveals that the author reserved the word to remark on righteous souls "crossing" in almost every instance. On one occasion he attached to *migrare* a hellish destination, thereby reversing the term's usual intended meaning. Specifically he reported that a woman's soul was buried after "crossing to hell" (*migrans inferno*).[39] In contrast to this infernal "passage," Gregory employed *migrare* approximately 94 times to imply a positive afterlife result for the deceased. To fully appreciate the sort of person for whom he reserved this word, one may note that more than half of his uses of *migrare*, 61 of the 95 total, refer to the deaths of saints.[40] Among the presumed "non-saints" to whose deaths he attached *migrare*,

Chlothar with the consolatory term: *transitum gloriosae memoriae domni Chlothari regis*; *Historiae* 9.20. In his paraphrased *vita* of Andrew Gregory caused the apostle to respectfully inquire of two parents about their son's demise, "what happened to this boy, that he migrated from this light (*ab hac luce migravit*)?"; *MA* 7.

38 *Historiae* 7.1: *si vos Deus de hoc mundo migrare voluerit, non in iudicium sed in requiem introire possetis.*

39 *GM* 105.

40 Saints: *Historiae* 1.30 (five saints), 1.39 (Hilary), 1.44 (Urbicus), 1.45 (Illidius), 1.47 (anonymous), 1.48 (Martin) (x 2), 2.5 (Aravatius), 2.21 (Eparchius), 2.23 (Sidonius Apollinaris), 2.39 (Eustochius), 3.18 (Chlodovald), 4.5 (Quintianus), 4.5 (Gallus), 4.36 (Nicetius of Lyons), 5.5 (Tetricus), 5,7 (Senoch), 5.10 (Patroclus), 5.36 (Heraclius), 5.37 (Martin of Galicia), 5.42 (Maurilio), 9.2 (Radegund), 9.40 (Radegund) (x 2), 9.42 (Radegund, from copy of a letter), 10.29 (Aredius); *VSM* 1.4 (Martin), 1.22 (Martin), 2.48 (Martin), 3.22 (Martin); *VP* 1.6 (Romanus), 2.1 (Illidius), 5.3 (Portianus), 6.7 (Gallus), 7.3 (Gregory of Langres), 8.5 (Nicetius of Lyons), 9.3 (Caluppa), 12.3 (Brachio) (x 2), 13.2 (Lupicinus), 14.4 (Martius), 17.6 (Nicetius of Trier), 18.3 (Ursus), 20.1 (Leobardus); *GM* 66 (Genesius), 103 (Maximus of Nola); *GC* 2 (Hilary), 15 (Venantius), 16 (Papula), 27 (Martial), 31 (anonymous), 31 (Injuriosus), 33 (Georgia), 50 (Severus), 53 (Lupianus), 79 (Ursinus), 84 (Sylvester), 90 (Lusor), 92 (Nicetius of Trier), 95 (Hospicius), 104 (Radegund), 108 (Martin and Genuarius).

Gregory eight times modified *migrare* with *ad Christum*, ten with *ad dominum*, and three with *ad caelum/caelos*. Of these twenty-one, twenty pertain to the death of saints. Otherwise, there are forty-four instances in which he recorded that a person "migrated" from a this-worldly locale: twenty times *a/de saeculo*, eighteen *ab/de/ex hoc mundo*, six *ab/de hac*

most are religious figures.[41] This one-sided application of the word to the deaths of righteous people led Martin Heinzelmann to contend that *migrare* represented Gregory's "usual term for a 'good' Christian death."[42] If by that Heinzelmann meant Gregory was estimating, or suggesting, that these righteous people's souls have attained salvation, then I concur. When the

(or other) *luce*, and four *a corpore*. Of these instances twenty-nine pertain to the demise of saints.

Fortunatus similarly preferred *migravit* above all other terms to indicate a saint's soul ascending to heaven. From his *vitae*, Saint Germanus *migravit ad Christum*, as did Hilary and Marcellus: Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Germani* 75; *Vita Hilarii* 14; *Vita Marcelli* 10. Three of Fortunatus's references to Saint Radegund's "passing" employ *migrare*: *migrare de saeculo*, *migravit de seculo*, *migrasse … de seculo*; Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Radegundis* 29, 38 (x 2). Otherwise he recorded that the queen *esset in caelo*: *Vita Radegundis* 36. Saint Martin *migravit ad astra*: *Vita Martini*, 2.383. In the epitaphs of *Carmina* 4 Fortunatus's most common way to denote a soul in heaven was to record that it traveled or resided *ad astra*, but the poet did not opt to couple this term with *migravit* in that book.

41 Bishops: *Historiae* 3.2 (Apollinaris), 3.17 (Ommatius), 4.18 (Pientius), 5.46 (Dalmatius), 6.9 (anonymous bishop of Avignon), 6.9 (Innocentius), 6.9 (Domnolus), 6.15 (Felix of Nantes), 8.39 (multiple bishops). Other ecclesiastics, ascetics, religious: *Historiae* 2.23 (anonymous priest), 5.5 (Deacon Peter, Gregory's brother), 6.29 (Disciola, nun, niece of Saint Salvius), 9.42 (Agnes, Mother Superior of convent, from copy of a letter); *VP* 6.7 (Virgin Meratina), 17.1 (anonymous abbot); *GM* 105 (anonymous ascetic); GC 58 (anonymous sub-deacon), 104 (multiple nuns).

Lay people (not counting saints): *Historiae* 2.31 (Albofled, Clovis's sister; x 2, one reference is from an excerpt of Remigius's letter to Clovis), 2.43 (King Clovis), 5.14 (Duke Guntram Boso), 6.30 (Emperor Tiberius, pious Christian ruler), 9.20 (King Guntram, from copy of Treaty of Andelot); 9.20 (King Childebert II, from copy of Treaty of Andelot), 9.26 (Queen Ingoberga, pious widow; x 2); *VP* 20.1 (parents of Saint Leobardus); *GM* 88 (Antoninus of Toulouse); *GC* 18 (anonymous peasant from Tours), 72 (two men from Autun; x 2); *MA* 7 (boy eventually resurrected).

Of all individuals whose deaths are referenced using *migrare*, only four are not pious. The reversal of the term's usual destination in regards to a hellbound female ascetic has been mentioned. Another pertains to one of the priests who conspired against their bishop, Sidonius Apollinaris. This reference comes from direct discourse spoken by a cup-bearer who relates a dream to the priest who is still living. The cup-bearer's respectful mention that the dead priest *de hoc mundo migravit* becomes all the more ironic when Gregory explicitly consigns the two priests to hell. Likewise, Gregory caused a soothsayer to predict that Guntram Boso would "migrate from this world" (*ab hoc mundo migrabis*) at an old age. Not only was the prognostication wrong, but contrary its wording suggestive of a celestial fate for the duke, Gregory later determined that Guntram Boso met an infernal end. See below, pp. 190-94. Finally, at *GM* 88 Gregory reported the expiration of a certain Antoninus, *iniquum in Deo et omnium hominum odibilem*, with the words *migrans a saeculo*. After the evil man was buried inside Saint Vincent's basilica at Toulouse the martyr twice arranged for the sarcophagus and its unworthy contents to be expelled from his church, the second time permanently. I can only attribute this single inexplicable use of the term in reference to a villainous individual's demise to an error, either on Gregory's part or that of a scribe. Since the anecdote is located towards the end of the very incomplete *GM*, maybe Gregory did not have the chance to proof the passage.

42 Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 171, n. 59.

bishop offered the verb in the perfect indicative, this was tantamount to him sharing an assessment that the soul of a deceased person already *migravit* to heaven. Consider, for example, two mentions of the death of the non-saint, Clovis's sister Albofled, in the *Historiae*. In the first instance Gregory explicitly indicated that the woman's soul went to heaven by recording that shortly after her baptism, she *migravit ad Dominum*.[43] Next Gregory claimed to quote a passage taken from Remigius's consolatory letter to the king. But while Saint Remigius actually had written that Albofled *de hoc luce discessit*, Gregory changed the wording to *de hoc mundo migravit*, expecting the latter phrase to effectively communicate the woman's salvation.[44]

Just as Gregory intended to generate a positive impression for a character's afterlife situation by use of the word *migrare*, so did he inform readers of a soul's salvation with the term *transire*, or *transitus*. In fact, *transitus*/*transire* is Gregory's preferred terminology when referring to the demise of Saint Martin. Of 45 total mentions of that confessor's death, 25 use *transitus*/*transire*, while seven of the twenty remaining references employ *migrare*.[45] Otherwise, out of 85 total uses of *transitus*/*transire* as these words pertain to death, 59 refer to the demise of saints.[46] As with *migrare*, the occasions

43 *Historiae* 2.31.

44 *Historiae* 2.31; *Epistulae Austrasicae* 1. *Discedere* is a word Gregory applied to both righteous and villainous individuals. He did not intend it to suggest a person's salvation, as he did with *migrare*. Beyond merely misquoting Remigius, Gregory apparently took liberties with the circumstances of Albofled's death. First, he mentioned Albofled's baptism immediately after depicting Clovis and 3000 soldiers' baptism, as if to suggest the sibling's ceremonies occurred at the same time. Furthermore, while Gregory claimed that the woman died soon after her baptism, Remigius made no mention of such a ceremony in his letter. Unlike Gregory, Remigius attributed Albofled's salvation to her virginity; *Epistulae Austrasicae* 1, ed., Gundlach, *MGH* Epistulae 3, 112: *quo scilicet et corono tecta, quam pro virginitate suscepit*. Remigius additionally assured his readers that Albofled's soul ascended to heaven by writing: *adsumpta credatur a Domino, quae a Deo electa migravit ad caelos*.

45 *Transitus* or *transire* (25): *Historiae* 1.48 *capitulum*, 1.48 (5), 2.43, 4.4, 4.51 (2), 10.31 (2), *VSM* 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 *capitulum*, 1.3, 1.4 (2), 1.5 (2), 1.6, 2.1, 2.31, 3.8, 4.5; *migrare* (7): *Historiae* 1.48 (2), *VSM* 1.4, 1.22, 2.48, 3.22, *GC* 108 – the last with Saint Genuarius. Words that do not connote Martin's afterlife: *obitus* or *obire* (3): *Historiae* 4.3, *VSM* 1.3, 1.4; *excessus* or *excedere* (2): *Historiae* 1.48, 2.1; *adsumptio* or *adsumptus* (2): *VSM* 1.32, 2.40; *defunctus* (1): *Historiae* 1.48; *egressus de corpore* (1): *VSM* 1.5; *locaretur in requie* (1): *VSM* 1.3; *quievit in pace* (1): *VSM* 1.3; *viduatus ab hoc mundo* (1): *VSM* 2.60. The only time Gregory used *mortuus* in reference to Martin, he did so through direct speech of a Jew who irreverently claimed the saint had no power because he had been reduced to dirt; *VSM* 3.50.

46 Saints besides Martin of Tours: *Historiae* 1.12 (Joshua), 1.38 *capitulum* (Anthony), 1.45 (Illidius), 1.47 (Injuriosus and *anonyma*), 1.48 (Catianus), 2.13 (Artemius), 2.13 (Venerandus), 2.23 (Sidonius Apollinaris, x 2), 3.18 (Chlodovald), 4.7 (Gallus), 4.37 (Friardus), 5.5 (Tetricus), 5.8 (Germanus of Paris), 5.12 (Brachio), 6.7 *capitulum* (Ferreolus), 10.29 (Aredius); *VP* 6.3 (Quintianus), 6.7 (Gallus),

in which Gregory used *transire* in reference to the death of an unsavory person are exceedingly rare, only two. Interestingly both of these pertain to the same individual, King Charibert. We will examine these anomalous instances in chapter 5, where it will be necessary also to consider Gregory's deployment of *transitus* in contrast to other words marking kings' deaths in the author's programmatic computation of years at *Historiae* 4. For now, it suffices to note that Gregory's consistent use of *transitus*/*transire* in reference to the demises of saints and righteous persons leads one to conclude that the author intended the word to intimate a soul "passing" to heaven. Let us now turn to the bishop's techniques surrounding his assessments of those who have entered *in iudicium*.

Hellmates

While Gregory's beliefs about souls ascending to heaven seem largely mundane and even obvious given his devotion to the saints, his views about condemned souls are little known and have received scant scholarly attention.[47] This lacuna is perhaps a vestige of a past academic prejudice against researchers stooping beneath what was thought to be more proper studies of afterlife in the abstract. Compared to analyses of Augustine's conceptual ruminations on all things eschatological, how could it possibly benefit the academy to ponder whether or not Gregory of Tours imagined certain people portrayed dying in his pages to reside in hell? To be sure, most of the evidence for Gregory's thoughts about people's damnation derive not from straightforward allusions to hell; inferences have to be drawn out of the many dozens of anecdotes throughout the corpus which contain this-worldly images of death. Of these the small number that

7.3 (Gregory of Langres), 7.4 (Gregory of Langres), 9.3 (Patroclus), 10.4 (Friardus, x 2), 17.6 (Nicetius of Trier), 19.4 (Monegundis), 20.4 (Leobardus, x 2); *GC* 22 (Maximus), 34 (*anomyma*), 53 (Lupianus), 100 (Felix of Bourges), 102 (Pelagia), 104 (Radegund).

Other ecclesiastics or ascetics: *Historiae* 4.33 (anonymous abbot of Randau), 5.5 (Sylvester, bishop elect, Gregory's relative), 6.39 (Remigius of Bourges, bishop), 10.31 (Injuriosus of Tours, bishop); *VP* 6.3 (Aprunculus, bishop), 6.4 (Evodius, priest).

Laypeople: *Historiae* 2.31 (Albofled, Clovis's sister), 2.43 (King Clovis), 3.37 (King Clovis), 3.37 (King Theudebert), 4.51 (King Clovis, x 2), 4.51 (King Theudebert, x 3), 6.20 (Chrodin, a charitable duke), 9.20 (King Guntram, x 2, from Treaty of Andelot), 9.20 (Chlothar I, x 3, from Treaty of Andelot); *VSM* 1.29 (King Charibert), 3.8 (Florentius, a Spanish envoy, from direct speech of Florentianus); *GC* 19 (King Charibert).

47 This has begun to change since Martin Heinzelmann's scattered remarks about villainous souls in *Gregor von Tours/Gregory of Tours*, for which, see p. 143 n. 3, 153, 174.

explicitly mentions damnation or the underworld do so in the context of the author fulfilling his pastoral objective to prompt readers to improve their current moral behavior or to avoid some specific sinful action (e. g., dishonoring holy days or committing perjury). For example, in a chapter of the *VSJ* which describes soldiers who die violently after stealing items from Saint Julian's church, Gregory offered the following rare edifying commentary: "It seems to me that just as illnesses are reversed and healed by the saint's power, so also the depravities of unbelievers are restrained and exposed by his prayer *for the correction of other people, lest they seek similar* [*follies*]."[48] Although the author certainly intended such anecdotes to serve an instructive function, this does not mean that he did not also design them to convey to readers his thoughts on the afterlife condition of those depicted dying. Indeed, Gregory was no more willing to hold back his "learned appraisals" about souls going to hell than he was to express how numerous saints *migravit ad caelos*. But to be clear, he offered far fewer explicit mentions of sinners' souls traveling *ad infernum* than he did for those proceeding to heaven.

This seeming discretion on Gregory's part likely rested on the fact that he wrote within a long tradition of early Christian reticence against proclaiming the damnation of specific souls. As Alan Bernstein has expertly addressed, Christian writers from antiquity up to the ninth century were much more inclined to use hell to stigmatize groups of "others" rather than to single out individuals.[49] This restrained approach had its origin in the New Testament, in which mentions of hell are quite rare and mostly entail hypotheticals or foreshadowing of future condemnations. One instance of a gospel writer stigmatizing a group through an allusion to hell is Matthew's passage where Jesus asks the Pharisees: "You serpents, you brook of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?"[50] In contrast to this typical oblique reference to a future event, the single New Testament episode that depicts individuals in hell is Luke 16:19-31 where Dives endures underworld torments while Lazarus rests inside Abraham's Bosom, the latter located in seeming proximity to the locus of the penalized soul.[51] This last ancedote held a central place in early Christian imaginative formulations of hell's precincts and the conditions their inhabitants experienced. But it did not unleash

48 *VSJ* 13; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 171, with my italics.

49 Bernstein, "Named Others."

50 Matthew 23:33; cited by Bernstein, "Named Others," 68.

51 See Hauge, *Biblical Tour of Hell*, who argues the Lukan tale is a Christian retelling of Odysseus's descent to Hades.

a torrent of late ancient Christian speculations about individuals actually enduring hellish suffering.[52] Instructive of a late ancient limitation for using hell to stigmatize is the turn of the fifth-century *Visio Pauli*, in which an angel leads the apostle on tours of both heaven and hell. While the author of this work imagined wrong-doers of many stripes suffering in an upper hell and "wrong-believers" who denied or ignored particular Christian doctrines incurring punishments in a lower zone, he forewent naming any individual infernal residents.[53] Similarly, the only time that the fifth-century historian Orosius explicitly assigned a hellish fate in his seven-book tome pertains to a band of Gothic soldiers about whom he wrote, they "will burn after death for the iniquity of their [heretical] faults."[54]

In the fifth and sixth centuries Gallic writers embraced the use of infernal rhetoric to drive home their messages for penance and expiation.[55] Salvian of Marseilles in 435 penned a tract, *Timothei ad ecclesiam libri IIII*, which contained an urgent appeal for Gaul's Christian nobility to bequeath their wealth to the churches lest they incur the *iudicium Dei*. Salvian doubly admonished readers to give by pointing out how both heavenly and infernal denizens were prepared to seize dying souls based on their charitable actions, or lack thereof: "Behold, the staff of the Sacred Tribunal awaits you as you leave this life. The torturing angels and the ministers of undying punishments stand at the ready."[56] Gallic preachers of the sixth century bent upon pressuring sinners to take responsibility and contribute towards their

52 For example, for all his theorizing about the possibility of an upper and lower hell and a breakdown of categories of sinners, Augustine never explicitly assigned an individual to hell by name. On the other hand, Augustine reflected, and popularized, a fifth-century western Christian pastoral turn which shifted the focus on sins requiring expiation from mortal sins (*crimina*) to *peccata levia*; Rebillard, *In hora mortis*, 214; Brown, "Decline of the Empire," 42-43. In the process of doing this, Augustine established a lasting paradigm for categories of sinners, based on what he thought prayers and alms offered *post mortem* might gain for the departed. In the *Enchiridion for Laurentius*, for example, Augustine wrote: "Accordingly, when sacrifices, whether of the altar or alms, are offered for the baptized dead, they are thank-offerings for the very good, propitiations for the not-so-very-bad [*non valde malis*], and, as for the very bad—even if they are of no help to the dead—they are at least a sort of consolation to the living"; Augustine, *Enchiridion*, 29.110; trans. by Outler, *Enchiridion*, 405-06. To this could be added a category of *non valde boni*, "not entirely good," who are better than the "not entirely bad."

53 *Visio Pauli* 40-42; Bernstein, "Named Others." 63-65. On the *Visio Pauli*, see also idem, *Hell and Its Rivals*, 105-11. On the possible influence of the *Visio Petri* on Gregory: Moreira, *Heaven's Purge*, 76-77.

54 Orosius, *Historiae adversum paganos* 7.33: *mortui vitio erroris arsuri sunt.*

55 Brown, *Ransom of the Soul*, 115-47.

56 Salvian of Marseilles, *Timothei ad ecclesiam* 3.3.15, cited with trans. by Brown, *Ransom of the Soul*, 119.

own salvation adopted a similar stratagem of using hell as a motivator.[57] For example, one of the anonymous authors of the Eusebius Gallicanus sermons explained that hellfire awaited those who failed to fully expunge their sins through penance while alive. That preacher declared: "The burning pit of hell will be opened and there will be a descent, but there will be no return."[58] Caesarius of Arles declared that the best way to avoid crime was to keep the day of one's death, and that of others, ever in mind. He exclaimed:

> When the multitude of the Just are placed at the King's right hand for glory, the sinner will see himself plunged into the depths of hell without any hope of pity or pardon… Going down into the endless depths of the abyss which forces him to enter its jaws, he will behold eternal punishment and eternal death, though he himself is destined never to die.[59]

But for all of their threats, these preachers did not identify anyone already inhabiting the inferno. A resident of Gaul who exemplified the late ancient trend of group branding through a hellish allusion was Fortunatus. He stigmatized the Jews by contrasting the proto-martyr Stephen's fate with that of the *gens Iudaea ferox*, writing: "he wins residence in heaven, but you rather are bound for the depths."[60]

Unlike countless earlier authors and his friend, the poet, Gregory bucked the trend of favoring group branding over stigmatizing individuals. While he undoubtedly anticipated an infernal end for all Jews, pagans, and heretics who in their lifetime declined to embrace all orthodox Christian doctrines, live penitently, and revere the saints, he did not expressly condemn one of these groups to perdition as did Fortunatus.[61] The bishop of Tours did, however, explicitly identify ten individuals going to hell or incurring hellfire, some even by name. Two hellmates whom Gregory called out were renowned figures, the heresiarch Arius of Alexandria and Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths. About Arius Gregory wrote that he spewed out his entrails while

57 Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success*, 98.

58 Eusebius Gallicanus *Sermo* 6.6; cited from and trans. by Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success*, 98. Bailey, ibid., 194, n. 111, directs to a comparable line at Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo*, 167.5.

59 Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo* 56.1; trans. by Mueller, *St. Caesarius*, 1: 279.

60 Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 1.3.7-10.

61 Fortunatus did indicate the infernal condition of one anonymous individual who murdered a deacon named Bobolenus. Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 4.15.8-10, ed. and trans. by Roberts, *Poems*, 242-43: "He [Bobolenus] lives in God, you, destined for death, are lost (*tu moriture peris*). He has won the glory of a martyr, you a thief's (sic) damnation (*tu damna latronis*); the palm gives pleasure to him, but for you there remains only pain."

on the privy and hurried "into the infernal fires" (*infernalibus ignibus*).[62] He recorded that the Arian monarch died and "immediately suffered the eternal burning of the flames of hell (*gehennae flammantis*)."[63] An early contemporary from Gaul whom Gregory stigmatized by name was one of King Chlothar I's retainers named Plato, who threatened to convert a church into a stable, died, and descended *in tartarum*.[64] Seven *anonymi* to whom Gregory explicitly attributed an infernal end were two priests of Clermont who conspired to murder their bishop, died, and therefore *pariter possidere tartarum*; a female ascetic who hoarded alms, died, and *migrans inferno sepulta est*; a custodian at Saint Martin's basilica who hid a gold coin intended for the poor box, committed perjury, and perished; a goldsmith and his accomplice who plotted to steal from a church but met with an earthquake and tumbled *viventes et vociferantes in tartarum*; and finally, an Armenian Christian who, given the opportunity to attain the martyr's crown by freezing to death, instead became a pagan. Because the latter abandoned what Gregory perceived was the only true faith, the bishop concluded, "in the future he will receive the punishment of everlasting fire (*perpetui ignis*)."[65] Unlike the previous mentions of hell and hellfire, Gregory's specific allusion to "everlasting fire" in this last instance refers to the future, unending variety of flames which malefactors will experience after Final Judgment. In the other cases, Gregory apparently was referring to the evildoers' souls experiencing flames associated with a judgment immediately after death.[66] Another way Gregory explicitly indicated a person's perdition was to record that one's soul is lost (e. g., *animam perdidit*), recalling Matthew 16: 26. Three named individuals stigmatized through this wording were a trio of Burgundian monarchs, all Arians. About Godigisel, Gundobad, and Godomar, whose family's fratricidal squabbles over their realm ended with the Frankish kings seizing all, Gregory concluded that they "lost their homeland and souls at the same moment" (*et patriam simul*

62 *Historiae* 3 prologue. Jerome did not remark on Arius's death in his chronicle.

63 *GM* 39; trans. by Van Dam, *Martyrs*, 61. Gregory blamed King Theodoric for Pope John I's martyrdom. Pope Gregory I shared another's vision in which the pope and Symmachus, both of whom Theodoric had killed, tossed the king into Mount Etna's fiery maw; Gregory I, *Dialogi*, 4.31.3.

64 *GM* 47.

65 Two priests: *Historiae* 2.23; female ascetic: *GM* 105; church custodian: *VSM* 1.31; goldsmith and accomplice: *GC* 62; Armenian convert to paganism: *GM* 95, with trans. by Van Dam, *Martyrs*, 120. On Gregory's reference to *tartarus* following the church custodian's death, see below, pp. 171-72. The future perpetual variety of fire Gregory ascribed to the Armenian presumably refers to the kind of fire sinners incur beginning on Judgment Day.

66 Cf. de Nie, *Views*, 148, who noted how Gregory sometimes referenced people's rapid descents.

et animas perdiderunt).[67] This passage indicates how Gregory without comment simply expected readers to interpret the kings' loss of their realm as a this-worldly sign symbolizing a simultaneous and unseen otherworldly event, the damnation of their souls.[68]

Gregory's imagination about evil souls incurring immediate hellish punishment was in keeping with a long emergent late ancient orthodox trend. By the turn of the fifth century, prominent church fathers, faced with congregants and readers curious about the condition of souls during the ever-lengthening timespan between people's this-worldly demises and Last Judgment, increasingly adopted notions that some of the newly departed would face some sort of first judgment immediately upon death.[69] The church father Jerome was one who employed the language of *iudicium* in reference to souls of wicked individuals experiencing sudden deaths. For example, he wrote that three wicked Old Testament figures, Chore, Dathan, and Abiroth, whom the earth devoured after they rebelled against Moses and Aaron, numbered among many people "judged" (*iudicatos*) prior to Judgment Day.[70] According to Danuta Shanzer, Jerome may have construed the judgment represented by an abrupt, this-worldly demise such as that the biblical trio incurred not as a soul's actual trial and conviction, but rather as a pre-trial procedure whereby the soul is incarcerated to await the true Judgment to

67 *Historiae* 3 prologue; trans. based on Thorpe, *Historiae*, 162. In this passage Gregory oversimplified the tale of the Burgundian rulers' deaths and fates, obscuring much in the process. Actually, four brothers had succeeded King Gundioc in Burgundy. Gregory left off Chilperic's name in *Historiae* 3 prologue, although he mentioned him earlier; *Historiae* 2.28. Gregory did not narrate how Godomar died. He did record that Gundobad slew Chilperic along with his wife; *Historiae* 2.28. Gundobad subsequently killed Godigisel in 500, after which he alone ruled Burgundy; *Historiae* 2.32. For the date of Godigisel's death: Marius of Avenches, *Chronica* s. a. 500. Gundobad was succeeded by his son Sigismund in 516. Through Avitus of Vienne's writings Gregory was familiar with the fact that Gundobad sympathized with Catholicism but did not practice the faith publicly. Gregory thought being a secretive Catholic was no better than remaining a heretic; *Historiae* 2.34. He related Gundobad's death in an ablative absolute (*mortuo Gundobado*) in a sentence pertaining to Sigismund's succession to the throne. Gregory did not divulge any specifics about how Gundobad expired, probably because the "heretic" died peaceably. On the Burgundians' relationships with Arianism and Catholicism, which were more complex than what Gregory portrayed them to be: Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, 18-20.

68 Peter Brown, "*Gloriosus Obitus*," 296-302, 310-14, contrasted Pope Gregory I's effort to measure people's unpurged sins with "Byzantine Christians" who "did not wait for News from Nowhere that told them in such vivid detail about the personal trajectory of individual souls"; quote at ibid., 301. I would suggest on account of the Gallic Gregory's proclivities to identify the hereafter condition of individual souls, as outlined in this chapter, that the bishop of Tours lay closer to the pope's imagination than to the aforementioned "Byzantine Christians."

69 On particular judgment following death: *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2d ed., 8: 31-33, 37-38.

70 Shanzer, "One Dead Girl," 163, citing Jerome, *Commentarium in Ecclesiastes* 7.18.

come.[71] More committed to particular judgment than Jerome was Augustine, who espoused the idea that all souls upon death would immediately enter "hidden receptacles" where they would experience either the *refrigerium* or punishment they deserved in accordance with their this-worldly conduct.[72] The fastidious Augustine distinguished between Hades, where newly dead wicked souls would experience immediate punishments, and Gehenna, where material eternal fires would torture the condemned, rejoined of body and soul, after Final Judgment. Gregory's imagination for the fates of damned souls ran closely with Augustine's in this respect, but the bishop of Tours' remark that the heretic King Theodoric suffered *gehennae flammantis* immediately instead of *post* Judgment Day reveals that his phraseology about the infernal fires did not conform to the bishop of Hippo's exacting terminology. Another writer active at the turn of the fifth century who combined particular judgment with judicial imagery was Sulpicius Severus. In the *Vita Martini* he detailed how a catechumen new to the holy man's company died of a fever before baptism. Martin had been absent when the lad expired, and he returned only to witness offices being performed over the corpse. The protagonist proceeded to resurrect the catechumen, who afterwards was baptized and subsequently shared this story with Sulpicius. The individual reportedly elaborated that when he had died, he went before a tribunal and a judge consigned him "to murky places" (*obscuris locis*) where he received "a sorrowful sentence" (*tristam … sententiam*). Two angels then arrived to inform the judge that Martin was praying for him, and so it was ordered that the youth be restored to his this-worldly patron.[73] Danuta Shanzer points out that Sulpicius, like Jerome, may have envisioned the catechumen's soul being held in an infernal prison. Like Jerome and perhaps Sulpicius, too, Gregory imagined the souls of newly deceased sinners undergoing an immediate experience akin to imprisonment. For example, in the *Historiae* he gave this general statement: "As we believe that heaven

71 Shanzer, "One Dead Girl," 160-64. Shanzer further considers Jerome's famous *Epistula* 22, well known by Gregory, wherein the priest described a frightening vision he experienced in which a judge established that he was too devoted to the pagan classics. Shanzer proposes Jerome again may have thought the episode to represent not a trial but a "preliminary hearing" conducted in hell; ibid., 165-67. Gregory opened the *GM* with a reference to Jerome's dream. Gregory was one of only a few late ancient Gallic writers to exhibit an appreciation of Jerome; Mathisen, "Use and Misuse of Jerome."

72 Augustine, *Enchiridion*, 29.109.1-4; Bernstein, *The Formation of Hell*, 318.

73 Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini* 7.1-7. Prison imagery: Shanzer, "One Dead Girl," 167-68. *Pace* Shanzer, but I cannot share her estimation (ibid., 168) that Sulpicius presented the catechumen undergoing a "near death experience." It seems to me that Sulpicius made it clear to readers he thought the man was fully deceased. Cf. Moreira, "Plucking Sinners," 42-43.

keeps those who have died as saints … so we believe that sinners will be held in that infernal prison (*infernali carcere*) until the Day of Judgment."[74] This passage is helpful in that it indicates Gregory's conviction that newly dead souls experienced one of only two hereafter options; however, it does not provide the full picture for Gregory's musings on sinners' afterlives. As he did with other kinds of unseen phenomena for which he had a keen interest, Gregory relied on a combination of literature, this-worldly signs, and the experiences of trustworthy visionaries to illuminate goings-on in hell.

Typical of ancient and late ancient impressions of the underworld Gregory believed that hell was abyssal, cavernous, smelly and fiery.[75] Two natural wonders that Gregory imagined to be visible signs given by God to educate humans on the reality of hell are the fires emanating from Mount Etna and the fiery springs of Grenoble, both of which "chasten sinners and symbolize the fire of hell" (*peccatores arguunt et ignem infernalem figurant*).[76] About Grenoble, Gregory explained that the springs' simultaneous generation of fire and water enabled people to comprehend God's mastery over both the *refrigerium gloriosae vitae* and *iudicium aeternae mortis*.[77] By *refrigerium* the author was here referencing not a pre-Judgment refreshment in Abraham's Bosom but heavenly salvation.[78] Furthermore, he elucidated how the ability to place one's hand in the springs' fiery waters without them burning attested how the physical body will be able to endure forever the perpetual fires post Judgment Day.[79] Gregory provided short quotes from the two literary sources whence he retrieved his information about Etna and Grenoble, Virgil's *Aeneid* and the poem of "a certain Elarius," respectively.[80]

Looking beyond nature and literature, as he did for the celestial plane, Gregory welcomed accounts by holy visionaries to provide added details about hellish topography. Gregory's best source for a hell-scape was the contemporary Auvergnat abbot Sunniulf of Randau. The latter informed the bishop about a hellish vision wherein he espied a fiery river in which

74 *Historiae* 10.13; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 563. The statement appears in Gregory's dispute about bodily resurrection. Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 170-1, remarked that Gregory here and elsewhere sometimes used the word *sanctus* to mean simply the opposite of "sinner." Brown, *Ransom of the Soul*, 158-62, considers how Gregory's advocacy of bodily resurrection also included a defense of the vitality of *post mortem* souls, both saints' and non-saints' souls.

75 *VSM* 1.31, 2.60; *GC* 110; *GM* 39; *VSJ* 30.

76 *CSR* 9. On Etna, see also *CSR* 13.

77 *CSR* 14.

78 De Nie, *Views*, 149.

79 *CSR* 14.

80 De Nie followed Migne and Krusch in identifying Gregory's "Elarius" with Hilary of Arles; de Nie, *Views*, 147, n 66.

many people were submerged at varying levels of the body.[81] A narrow bridge over the river led to a great white house.[82] Sunniulf related that it was explained to him (by a demon guide?) how disciplined people could cross the bridge, while those who did not control their subordinates would be thrown in. Both abbot and bishop interpreted this vision as constituting a divine reproof intended for the benefit of Sunniulf, who admitted that prior to the frightening event he had acted insufficiently firm towards his own monks.[83] Unlike Salvius's otherworldly experience whereby his soul actually went to heaven while he was dead, Sunniulf's hellish incident took the form of a dream (*a somno excutitur*). This does not mean that Gregory thought any less of the abbot's encounter than Salvius's, nor that he felt its details were any less indicative of otherworldly reality. Gregory well may have interpreted the gleaming white house in the underworld as resting within Abraham's Bosom, that comfortable part of the underworld where the Old Testament patriarch had conferred with Dives across an impassible chasm in Luke 16.[84] Whatever Gregory imagined about the otherworldly predicament for souls of the *non valde boni*, his writings attest that he preferred to comment on the afterlife of obviously villainous souls whose whereabouts in the discomfiting parts of the underworld his readings of the signs enabled him to confidently discern.[85]

81 Gregory and/or Sunniulf may have been familiar with *Visio Pauli* 31, which depicts sinners standing in a fiery river to a depth that accords with their sins. Perhaps by the late sixth century this river motif had become well-known, along with the addition of the bridge to *refrigerium*. Pope Gregory I, *Dialogi*, 4.37, for example, also mentioned a bridge over which souls crossed to arrive at a mansion of gold. One underworld river that the Gallic Gregory at least knew the name of was the Acheron: *VSM* 4 prologue. Otherwise, our author provided a laundry-list of allusions from Virgil's *Aeneid* at *GM* preface, while at the same time he commented that he had no desire to memorialize them, lest he be damned (*ne in iudicium aeternae mortis, Domino discernente, cadamus*). For the lack of classical influence on Gregory: Bonnet, *Le Latin de Grégoire*, 48-53.

82 *Historiae* 4.33.

83 See Moreira, *Dreams, Visions*, 149-52. Among Gregory's model severe abbots were Lupicinus and Brachio: *VP* 1.2, 12 prologue, 2.

84 Abraham's Bosom: Luke 16: 19-31. Maybe Gregory envisioned "mostly good" souls – perhaps properly disciplined monks who nevertheless had a morsel of sin remaining on their souls and therefore could not ascend to heaven? – enjoying *refrigerium* there while awaiting Last Judgment, on which day they would make a final appeal to a saint to intercede on their behalf. Gregory referenced Lazarus in Abraham's Bosom during his disputation over bodily resurrection: *Historiae* 10.13. Isabel Moreira, *Dreams, Visions*, 150, n. 56, is mistaken that Sunniulf died in the 560s. Sunniulf only became abbot when his predecessor died of the plague in 571. Thus, his hellish dream dates between 571 and the early 590s. Still, it seems likely that Sunniulf's mention of the bridge predates Pope Gregory's similar allusion, as Moreira has proposed.

85 In his epitaph for Vilithuta, a Parisian matron of barbarian descent, Fortunatus offered an extended contrast between the experiences to be had by the residents of heaven and hell; one

Signs of Condemnation

The basic visible criterion that stirred Gregory to suspect a soul's possible damnation was a malefactor incurring a sudden or violent demise. In this respect there was no small amount of raw data for the bishop to investigate. He read about, heard about, witnessed and then recorded in writing how many individuals dropped dead after committing crimes; they fell from walls, fell into the earth, and fell victim to waters and waves. Some were murdered; some cut down with swords, some stabbed, and others bludgeoned to death. Soldiers slew one another, and judicial agents summarily dispatched some criminals while slowly torturing others to death. Among the many violent images of death Gregory tendered throughout his pages, one kind of evidence that he found suggestive of condemnation was the presence of fiery, funerary, and/or odoriferous imagery. Such signs had their converse in the form of those pleasant appearances and fragrant odors attendant on holy people's demises which helped the bishop acknowledge how their souls ventured to a celestial abode. One example of infernal images at death which contributed to Gregory realizing a person's hellish end involves a deacon who had quit the church and thereafter became a rapacious treasury official. When this man stole sheep belonging to Saint Julian's church at Brioude, nearby shepherds protested, prompting the villain to snidely ask: "Do you think that Julian eats mutton?"[86] The cad further insulted the martyr by beating the shepherds and taking the beasts. Days after committing these callous acts, he then had the gall to visit Julian's shrine. Gregory wrote:

> After kneeling on the ground in front of the tomb, he was soon struck with a fever… Then, as the fever became stronger, the wretch shouted that he was on fire because of the martyr. Although at first he had kept quiet, after the flames of judgment had been applied to his soul he confessed his crimes… But even though water was brought in a vessel and sprinkled on him, smoke poured from his body as if from a furnace. Meanwhile his suffering limbs, as if on fire, turned black and produced such a stench that scarcely any of the bystanders could tolerate it. …Soon the bystanders left, and this man exhaled his spirit (*spiritum exalavit*).[87]

nourishes the *felices* while the *infelices* become food for the flames. The poet provided little in the way of topography for either hereafter; Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 4.26.79-136.

86 *VSJ* 17; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 175.

87 *VSJ* 17; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 175-76.

This anecdote from the *Miracula* typifies Gregory's principal agenda to impress upon readers a need to behave morally given the actuality of saintly *virtutes*, which could and, as Gregory's writings on Saint Julian attest, frequently did take the form of divine vengeance. But what did our author make of the wrongdoer's soul? Usually, with his point about saintly power proven, Gregory would simply end such an episode with an image of the villain's this-worldly demise. But in this instance he appended the following: "As a consequence there is no doubt (*haud dubitum est*) about what place the man who departed from here with such a judgment (*cum tali … iudicio*) occupied [in Hell]."[88] Here Gregory plainly expressed how he expected a detailed depiction of a malefactor's wrongful action followed by the individual incurring "hellish" symptoms – e. g., high fever, smoke, blackened limbs and noxious smell – and expiring – notably in this case at the very "feet" of the offended saint – provided more than ample evidence to determine the soul's otherworldly predicament. *Haud dubium est*; Gregory did not have to remark about the infernal destination of a soul belonging to a person whom he had depicted being visibly "judged" by a saint who was moved to exact divine vengeance. In fact, more often than not he simply ended such an anecdote and expected the reader to ruminate over the particulars in order to derive a conclusion about the condition of a dead person's soul. Additionally, Gregory left it for the reader to consider that by virtue of the tax collector's sudden death he had no time to sufficiently repent and cleanse his soul of the stains of his manifold sins.[89] Importantly, Gregory's wording betrays how he perceived this divinely wrought, visible demise to represent an actual trial complete with final judgment; his was not to envision a possible pre-trial scenario à la Jerome or Sulpicius. By virtue of the damning visible evidence surrounding the tax collector's death Gregory interpreted that the martyr passed judgment on the culprit's soul and sentenced him to endure the tortures of particular judgment, which would be followed only by eternal torments met upon both body and soul come Judgment Day.[90]

88 *VSJ* 17; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 176.

89 Gregory as pastor obviously wanted readers to come away from this anecdote with an understanding that they should not seek penance for sins at the last minute. The Eusebius Gallicanus preachers similarly stressed urgency in seeking penance, believing it would no longer be possible to obtain after death; Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success*, 97-98. On the requirement of time for repentance: Moreira, *Heaven's Purge*, 75-76.

90 Another person whose corpse exhibited fiery, hellish qualities was a woman who was entrusted to collect funds intended for ransoming prisoners. Rather than fulfill this duty, she instead horded gold coins in a large jar hidden in her cell. Following her death and the subsequent

Another eventual hellmate whose corpse exhibited a ghastly sign, if not a fiery one, was one of King Sigibert's retainers named Childeric, who seized a villa held by the church of Saint Mitrias. The ensuing property dispute went before a royal court where Bishop Franco of Aix warned about the swift vengeance of his town's saint, but to no avail. When the judgment went against Franco, an emboldened Childeric leveled further accusations against the prelate and caused him to be bound, forcibly removed from court, and fined. Back at Aix, Franco retaliated by enacting a ritual humiliation of Mitrias's relics, at which point Childeric contracted a lasting and virulent fever and became bedridden. Despite languishing in this condition for a whole year, the official would not change his *mens prava*. Childeric then lost all of his hair, and his appearance became such "that you might think he had once been buried and then recently taken from his tomb after a funeral."[91] Reduced to looking like a living cadaver, Childeric finally acknowledged his fault in the legal matter and determined to repent, but at the very moment when his servants placed atoning gold on Mitrias's tomb, he died (*spiritum exalavit*). Gregory concluded: "Because he had unjustly seized this acquisition, he earned *the loss of his soul* (*detrimentum animae*). The bishop obtained from this *enemy of the church* (*inimico ecclesiae*) the revenge that he had predicted would result from the power of the athlete of God."[92] This last sentence makes Gregory's pastoral point that eternal consequences could result if one did not heed a bishop's warning to respect saintly *virtutes*.[93] Gregory also presumably intended readers to take away from this tale a lesson that it was futile to repent at the last minute. Unlike Childeric, they should not delay addressing their sins to the point that one's very body becomes a ghastly sign suggestive of an impending divine judgment. Gregory had elsewhere written: "For the glory of the saint is apparent

discovery of the money, a bishop ordered that the lucre be poured on the corpse and that it be reburied. Afterwards the faithful reported hearing screams in the night coming from the tomb. When the bishop ordered the tomb to be opened again, "he saw that the gold, as if it had been melted in a furnace, had trickled into the woman's mouth along with its sulphurous flame"; *GM* 105; trans. by Van Dam, *Martyrs*, 132. Gregory expected readers of this anecdote to adopt his own estimation of the woman's soul *migrans inferno* based on his provision of the hellish visual and olfactory details surrounding the corpse.

91 *GC* 70; trans. by Van Dam, *Confessors*, 74.

92 *GC* 70; trans. by Van Dam, *Confessors*, 75, with my italics.

93 Unlike his wicked agent, King Sigibert avoided possibly losing his soul in this instance. For at the start of the trial, Bishop Franco begged the king not to hear the case, "lest he be sentenced by a celestial judgment" (*ne caelesti iudicio condemnetur*). Because Gregory wrote that only judges (*auditores*) finished the case, apparently the king wisely followed the bishop's admonition; *GC* 70; Halfond, "Negotiating Episcopal Support," 8.

in both situations: he restores ill people to health so that they may suffer no longer, and he censures unbelievers so that they may avoid condemnation in a future court."[94] As was addressed in the previous chapter, Gregory admonished sinners to develop habits of regularly, respectfully appealing for saints to supply them with salutary and expiatory aid. Individuals needed to become like the "martyrs" and firmly resist the vice-laden traps of this world. Whatever sin blemished the soul required remittance in this lifetime, but not at the last moment. Based on Gregory's conviction that judgment frequently happened at death, particularly for the obviously unrighteous, it seems he believed the end of life marked the deadline for expiatory exertions. By adopting this stance Gregory rejected outright the sentiments of a growing chorus of late ancient Christians who hoped that practices such as extending surrogate alms might expiate the sins of souls *post mortem*.[95]

Another villainous individual for whom infernal overtones accompanied death was a person named Pastor. His demise had the added element that it embodied a theme as old as time, interpreting death by rare natural occurrence as a divine act. According to Gregory, Pastor began appropriating fields worked by dependents of Saint Julian's basilica. When the church's priest sent clerics to mediate, Pastor answered with arrow-fire. Then, when August rolled around, the villain traveled to Brioude to join in the merriment of Julian's festival. Gregory wrote: "suddenly, there was a flash of lightning and the rumble of thunder. When the thunder rumbled again, Pastor was struck with a bolt of fire that fell from heaven; but none of the other people died. He then burned like a flaming funeral pyre and, as a warning for everyone, was gradually consumed."[96] Here Gregory offered no mention of infernal punishment, but just as he explained how Childeric's funereal

94 *VSJ* 13; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 171.

95 Shanzer, "Jerome, Tobit, Alms," 99-102, suggests about Jerome's *Ep.* 66.5.3 that it "may be the first explicitly documented example of post mortem alms offered by another (i. e., surrogate alms) to extinguish the sins of one deceased"; quoted at ibid., 100. For Gregory, one exception to death marking the deadline for a sinner to expiate sin was in the event that a saint resurrected the deceased, such as when Saint Martin revived three individuals, as described by Sulpicius Severus. Gregory independently recorded how Martin saved three men condemned to the gallows, but none of them had expired before their rescue; *VSM* 1.21, 3.53 (x2). The first tale depicts a thief who was about to hang begging Saint Martin either to save his life or to forgive him of his sins *in posterum*. As it happened the noose broke, the thief survived, and he gave credit to Martin; *VSM* 1.21. Isabel Moreira points out that in this anecdote Gregory likened Martin's rescue of the thief to the confessor's resurrection of the catechumen and to Christ's harrowing of hell; Moreira, "Plucking Sinners," 48-49. Moreira, ibid, 49-50, contends: "In associating Martin with Christ's *descensus ad inferos*, Gregory reflects an ancient view of the descent as an ongoing mission to rescue Christian souls."

96 *VSJ* 15; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 173.

countenance and sudden demise at Mitrias's church indicated that villain's *detrimentum animae*, so did he expect readers to readily interpret the imagery of charred remains to signify that the martyr of Brioude passed judgment on this *inimicus ecclesiae*. Gregory may have intended diligent readers of his corpus to note how Pastor incurred the same kind of sudden death as did one of the prototypical sinners from *Historiae* 1, Chus, whom our author described as inventing idolatry and magic before being "divinely devoured by fire" (*divinitus ignem consumptum*).[97] The author ended his account about Pastor by presenting the other attendees of Julian's festival exemplifying what readers were supposed to take from the story; they deemed the frightful occurrence adequate warning that they should not take what belonged to Julian's church.[98]

Another "act of God" which bears an infernal air about it is earthquakes. Two individuals who suffered a judgment similar to that incurred by the three Old Testament villains who had rebelled against Moses, as had been recalled by Jerome, were a fifth-century goldsmith and a man sent to convey liturgical items to a church at Lyons.[99] The duo conspired to switch the gold and gem-encrusted originals with replicas made from silver. After delivering the fakes, the pair met at the goldsmith's shop to divide the spoils. Gregory continued:

> suddenly the room was jolted by an earthquake and collapsed upon them. The ground split beneath their feet and swallowed them up along with their money. Alive and screaming they fell into the underworld (*descenderuntque viventes ac vociferantes in tartarum*). God swiftly took vengeance (*ultusque est Deus velociter*) for deceiving his church.[100]

The evidence of these villains' earthy envelopment more than sufficed to convince Gregory how that catastrophe symbolized the imposition of God's vengeful judgment which resulted in the culprits' damnation. In the *Historiae* Gregory reported a similar terrestrial calamity, the 563 landslide alongside Lake Geneva which caused the Rhone River to flood. In the aftermath of

97 This and other fatal lightning strikes: *Historiae* 1.5, 10.30; *VSJ* 13. See de Nie, *Views*, 144-46.

98 Gregory also commented that people who remained skeptical about Julian's role in Pastor's death should take note how the lightning bolt struck only the single sacrilegious person, but not the many innocent bystanders present for the festivities. The writer elsewhere proposed that when lightning once struck Julian's church, the fact that the bolt bounced about inside but missed all the faithful in attendance proved the martyr's *virtus*; *VSJ* 27.

99 *GC* 62. The date derives from a mention that it was Emperor Leo I, ruled 457-474, who gifted the vessels to the church.

100 *GC* 62; trans. by Van Dam, *Confessors*, 69.

the disaster thirty monks ventured to the ruins of a collapsed fortress and began gathering up valuable metals. Gregory wrote: "While they were busy at their task, they once more heard the bellowing of the mountain. But as they were held fast by their ferocious greed (*saeva cupiditate*) a part of the hillside which had not previously collapsed now fell on top of them. It buried and killed them (*quos operuit atque interfecit*) and they were not found afterwards."[101] Gregory opted to omit from this latter episode any comedic images of individuals screaming as they fell *in tartarum*, but his pastoral message was the same. In the previous anecdote the duo's deceptive actions prompted the author to cite a peasant maxim: "often hearts are united between the one who is greedy for gold (*inhiante aure*) and the one who proposes the deceptions of a fraud…"[102] It was greed that led the bearer of the precious gifts to become susceptible to the Devil's wiles (*diabolo instigante*) and agree to the goldsmith's scheme. Likewise, it was greed that overwhelmed the monks' sensibilities and caused them to ignore the mountain's rumbling. Monks of all people should have been focused on building up their virtues, but instead, these thirty, like the goldsmith and his accomplice, died with their souls weighed down by cupidity. Gregory can only have expected readers to share his imagination that the sudden burial symbolized passage of an eternal divine judgment on their souls.

Another individual *inhians aure* was a custodian who, when given the responsibility to take money for the poor box at Saint Martin's basilica, pocketed a large gold coin for himself. When the resident poor confronted this man about a reported donation to the church, he perjured himself using Martin's name and then immediately collapsed to the ground in pain. Although the man straightaway confessed his crime and requested that the coin be restored, he instantly died (*amisit spiritum*). In this instance Gregory offered no depiction of a funereal or fiery visage; instead, incensed by the person's greed, he launched into an invective:

> Oh, miserable man! He was trapped by his evil desire and died in such a way that he lost the reward of life and did not possess the misfortunes of the money that he acquired. Accursed greediness, … [now] you throw this man to the depths (*ad ima*) because of one small gold coin. … And you … [now] plunge this man into the lower regions (*in tartarum*) because of a small coin.[103]

101 *Historiae* 4.31; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 225.
102 *GC* 62; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 69.
103 *VSM* 1.31; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 223.

Of all the world's vices, *cupiditas* apparently was the one that most provoked preacher Gregory's indignation. Among the very rare sermon-inspired apostrophes in the corpus, five pertain to greed, including the writer's famous harangue at *Historiae* 5 prologue against the sinful Frankish kings who caused the civil war of the mid-570s.[104]

One such "sermon," while it does not follow a tale in which a person expired, speaks directly to Gregory's impressions about the fates of people enslaved by greed. The bishop preached: "Devil, such money is yours, and through such profits you lead those who obey you to hell (*ad tartarum*). Such a transaction *inflicts the mark of condemnation in the present* (*in praesenti damni notam ingerit*) and produces varieties of different punishments in the future."[105] This passage reveals that whenever Gregory witnessed a person demonstrably captive to greed suffer some calamitous misfortune, he interpreted the latter as a *nota damni*, a sign which prefigures ensuing punishment in the hereafter. In order to help readers to strengthen their faith and avoid the pitfalls of vice, Gregory desired that they undertake the same cognitive exercise regarding the dead that he did. He wanted them to contemplate the otherworldly condition of souls of the dead by ruminating over the significant details he generously provided in his text. He wished them to follow along as individual characters committed crimes, disregarded the saints and their churches, and almost invariably endured fatal *notae damni*. As a keen observer of death himself, Gregory well knew that not every this-worldly demise entailed fiery or hellish overtones. Therefore, to assist readers in following his cognitive process for assessing souls' fates, he did the same for the infernally condemned as for those he ascertained to be heaven-bound: he provided a deliberate vocabulary to systematically insinuate the souls' *post mortem* whereabouts.

Communicating Damnation: *Interire, Iudicium Dei, Ultio Divina*

Gregory deployed a specific vocabulary in relation to death to communicate to readers his estimation of the eternal condemnation of certain individual souls. He appropriated such terms presumably from the same sources whence he derived his sizeable lexicon for death itself, chronicles and historical texts. Gregory's corpus contains more than 200 different single and multiple-word

104 *GM* 105; *GC* 110; *VSM* 1.31; *Historiae* 5 prologue.

105 *GC* 110; trans. by Van Dam, *Confessors*, 112, with my italics.

terms representative of people's decease, along with the associated concepts of movement to an otherworld and divine punishment.[106] We already have considered how Gregory reserved two terms, *migrare* and *transire/transitus*, to intimate, and even to communicate clearly, his reasoned assessments for some individuals' souls attaining salvation.[107] Likewise, our author favored four expressions from the hundreds of words associated with death and afterlife distributed throughout the text with which to insinuate or announce

106 For deaths of large groups of soldiers and individual victims, the writer selected words appropriate to the scene. General words reflective of warlike and violent death include, e. g., slaughter (*caedes*, *strages*, *trucidare*), kill (*interficere*, *interimere*), slay in battle (*occidere*), murder (*homicidium*, *iugulare*, *necare*), and fall (*cadere*, *concidere*). Specific, this-worldly demises include, e. g., drowning (*dimergere*, *mergere*, *submergere*), stoning (*obruere lapidibus*), hanging (*pendere*, *suspendere*), crucifixion (*damnare ad fixionem crucis*), decapitation (*decisere capite*, *amputare caput*, *decollare*), and piercing with a sword (*perfoedere gladio*).

107 The method I have used to test whether Gregory meant a term to connote a deceased character's soul entering *in iudicium* or *in requiem* involves, first, analyzing each "death-term" to determine whether the author reserved it for either obviously "righteous" or "villainous" individuals a sufficiently large percentage of the time (90% or more). In the event that he employed a term in reference to the deaths of both "righteous" saints and "villainous" people (e. g., robbers of churches), then obviously he did not intend said term to imply either salvation or condemnation; instead, he meant the term only to represent an end to life in this world. Such proves to be the case for most common expressions by which the writer indicated characters expiring, words such as *mortuus/mori*, *obitus/obire*, *defunctus*, *discedere*, *spiritum exalare*, *spiritum amisit*, and *animam rededdit*. For example, Gregory used *obitus*, or *obire*, 171 times in his text. While most instances pertain to the deaths of those whom he obviously would have deemed righteous persons, including saints and ecclesiastics, he sometimes used *obitus*/*obire* to relate the demise of "villainous" people such as persecutors of Catholics, several individuals characterized as "evil." and a few murderers. Because Gregory regularly used *obitus*/*obire* in reference to the demise of both "righteous" and "villainous" persons, one must conclude that he only intended the word to indicate a this-worldly death, not to intimate peoples' otherworldly conditions. Likewise, consider the less common expression, *spiritum exalare*, which appears 56 times in the corpus. Eight instances refer to the demise of saints, but at least four pertain to the demise of obvious "villains" including the heretic bishop Athloc, an anonymous heretic landowner, and two perjurers. Again, the fact that Gregory applied the term to report the deaths of "saintly" and "villainous" people indicates he only meant it to connote an end to this life. Conducting this first step of the exercise disqualifies all but six terms as potentially indicating afterlife.

A second step required to confirm whether Gregory intended a term to connote afterlife is to examine any seeming exceptions. If these anomalies can be accounted for (e. g., Gregory being ironic, or writing what a character might have said about another), then one may conclude that the author in fact intended said term to be connotative of afterlife. Gregory did not intend descriptions of specific varieties of violent demise (e. g., being stabbed to death) in and of themselves to connote afterlife. For example, although he recorded that his brother Peter was abruptly disposed of with a spear (*lancea sauciatum interfecit*), he certainly did not expect the violent imagery drawn up from his words to cause readers to suspect the victim's soul was damned.

peoples' condemnation. From the most commonly used to least these are *interitus/interire*, *iudicium Dei*, *divina ultio*, and *exitus*.[108]

The term Gregory apparently felt was most compelling to infer a soul's eternal loss judging by the number of times he used it is *interitus*, or *interire* (to perish).[109] Gregory borrowed the term from near contemporary historical sources. For example, in his Latin adaptation and continuation of Eusebius's chronicle, Jerome used *interitus*, or *interire*, eight times. Gregory may have been struck by the church father's prominent use of the word in two instances. Jerome first related in his chronicle's preface that the Arian emperor Valens *interiit*, and then he referenced the same emperor's perishing (*interitum*) near the very end of that text.[110] In addition, Jerome deployed *interiit* one time in reference to a person who died after being "struck by God's anger" (*percussus Dei ira*).[111] He expressed divine involvement in another person's death by recording how a slaughter of Christians was averted, *Dei voluntate*, when Emperor Julian was wounded by a spear and *interiit*.[112] Like Jerome, most of his continuators were sparing with use of the word *interire*. In general they do not appear to have employed the word to stigmatize the

108 We will consider the first three terms connoting a soul's entry *in iudicium* immediately below. For the fourth, *exitus*, as an indicator of a person's damnation, see below, pp. 253-55.

109 Gregory's first use of *interitus* in the *Historiae* is in reference to the "perishing" of the Israelite kings; *Historiae* 1.4. Specifically, Gregory wrote that after the Israelites began practicing idolatry, neither the kings perishing (*interitus*) nor the land's ruin nor the prophets' warnings stopped them. Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 138 with n. 56, identified this passage as the "typological starting-point" for a pattern which includes the contemporary civil wars, for which God would take vengeance on kings.

110 Jerome, *Chronicon, praefatio*, s. a. 373; Helm, ed., 18, 247 c: *post Valentis interitum*; s. a. 379; Helm, ed., 249 c.

111 Jerome, *Chronicon* s. a. 161 a. Chr.; Helm, ed., 141 b. The individual in question was Judas Maccabeus's opponent, Alcimus.

112 Two deaths Jerome recounted using *interiit* involved lightning strikes; Jerome, *Chronicon*, s. a. 876 a. Chr.; Helm, ed., 79b-80b d (Silvius Aremulus, king of Alba Longa); s. a. 284; Helm, ed., 224-25 g (Emperor Carus). As he did with Valens, Jerome referred to Julius Caesar's death in a temporal clause and in a passage distinct from that recounting his death; Jerome, *Chronicon*, s. a. 43 a. Chr.; Helm, 157 i: *post C. Caesaris interitum*; actual death: s. a. 44; Helm, ed., 157 c: *Idibus Martiis C. Iulius Caesar in curia occiditur*. Another death was that of Cornificius, who *interiit* on the battlefield: Jerome, *Chronicon*, s. a. 41 a. Chr.; Helm, ed., 159 a.

One need not conclude that Jerome intended to imply a person's afterlife condition by use of *interire*, as I argue Gregory did. All but one of the chronicler's uses of *interire* pertain to a person who died prematurely or violently. An exception is his application of the word for the demise of the Old Testament patriarch, Joseph, who lived for 110 years; Jerome, *Chronicon* s. a. 1657 a. Chr.; Helm, ed., 36a c. This suggests that Jerome's deployment of *interire* was not as deliberate as Gregory's. The latter never would have used *interiit* in reference to the death of a righteous patriarch.

dead.[113] An exception among Latin chroniclers is Hydatius of Lemica, whose mere eight uses of *interitus*/*interire*, all applied to the deaths of villainous individuals, compare remarkably with Gregory's employment of the term.[114] One account by Hydatius reports how the Huns were divinely punished by celestial blows in the form of plague, famine, and military defeat, after which their king, Attila, soon *interiit*.[115] Elsewhere the chronicler related that at the very moment the Arian Vandal King Gunderic attempted to seize a Catholic church, "he was possessed by a demon and by the judgment of God he perished" (*dei iudicio demone correptus interiit*).[116] In the very next

113 Prosper of Aquitaine in his continuation of Jerome recorded that the Visigothic king Athaulf *interiit*; Prosper Tiro, *Epitoma chronicon* s. a. 415, ed. Mommsen, *MGH* AA 9, 467. The Gallic Chronicle of 452 referred to the *interitum* of Emperor Valentinian II; *Chronica Gallica a. CCCCLII*, s. a. 392; ed. Mommsen, *MGH* AA 9, 650. Marius of Avenches recounted how the Frankish Duke Buccelin *interiit* with his entire army while fighting the Byzantines; Marius of Avenches, *Chronica* s. a. 555; ed. Mommsen, *MGH* AA 11, 237. It does not appear that Prosper, Marius, and the authors of the Gallic chronicles of 452 and 511 intended any words pertaining to death in their texts to suggest afterlife condition. Sulpicius Severus used *interire* only five times in his chronicle. He, too, apparently applied the term only to connote violent deaths or deaths in large numbers, not afterlife; Sulpicius Severus, *Chronica* 1.6, 1.38 (70,000 men), 1.44 (20,000 Syrians), 1.45. Sulpicius's remark that innocent Christians accused of starting the fire at Rome under Nero "were fed to dogs and perished" (*laniatu canum interirent*) confirms that that chronicler did not reserve the term for "villainous" characters; *Chronica* 2.29.

Unlike Sulpicius, Orosius used *interire* mainly in reference to the deaths of individuals (20 uses) rather than groups (3 uses): Orosius, *Historiae adversum paganos* 1.4 (Ninus), 2.3 (Spartans at Thermopylae), 3.20 (Alexander), 3.22 (Caecilius), 3.23 (Neoptolemus), 4.8 (Hannibal senior), 4.20 (L. Aemilius), 5.10 (Antiochus), 5.19 (Pompey), 5.23 (Claudius), 6.16 (Julius Caesar), 7.8 (Sabinus and Flavians), 7.14 (Antoninus Pius), 7.15 (Lucius Verus), 7.16 (Commodus), 7.17 (Geta), 7.23 (Claudius II), 7.24 (Carus), 7.27 (x 2) (Egyptians drowned in the Red Sea; beasts in Egypt), 7.28 (Maximinus), 7.30 (Julian), 7.36 (Gildo). While many of Orosius's uses of *interire* pertain to people dying violently, it does not appear he meant the term to signify anything other than a this-worldly demise. For example, when referring to people dying by disease he treated *interiit* and *obiit* as interchangeable: compare *Historiae adversum paganos* 5.23: *morbo insuper correptus esset, interiit*, and 7.14: *morbo correptus interiit*, with 5.10: *correptus morbo diem obiit*, 7.11: *confectus morbo diem obiit*, 7.15: *repentino morbo diem obiit*, 7.16: *morbo obiit*. Further suggestive that Orosius intended to convey nothing beyond an end to this life by use of *interiit* is the fact that he deployed the term in reference to the death of only one of the individuals who initiated what the author identified as the ten persecutions of Christians; Orosius, *Historiae adversum paganos* 7.28.

114 Hydatius several times referenced divine causation and he even explicitly indicated afterlife condition. An instance of the latter is his remark that Saint Martin of Tours *transit ad dominum*; Hydatius, *Chronica*, s. a. 405, ed. Burgess, 80.

115 Hydatius, *Chronica*, s. a. 452-453, ed. Burgess, 102: *divinitus partim fame, partim morbo, quodam plagis caelestibus feriuntur.* Hydatius similarly reported that during an earlier war versus Aetius the Huns were felled with divine aid (*divino caesa superatur auxilio*); s. a. 451, ed. Burgess, 100.

116 Hydatius, *Chronica* s. a. 428, ed. Burgess, 88.

anecdote Hydatius recorded that the Sueve King Heremigarius abandoned Emerita, thereby offending its patron saint, Eulalia, after which the ruler was cast into the Ana River by God's hand (*divino brachio*) and *interiit*.[117] Seizing churches, offending saints, and incurring immediate divine judgments in the form of "perishing": no passages from previous Latin chronicles can have impressed Gregory's imagination on communicating death in the form of divine retribution like these.[118] So let us now consider several examples from the bishop of Tours' corpus which reveal how he combined telling fatal imagery with deliberate terminology, sometimes emphatically doing so through structural and literary devices, to assist readers in repeated exercises of deducing the invisible, infernal consequences behind certain people's visible deaths.

Gregory deployed *interitus* in relation to death as many as 120 times in order to convey an individual's damnation. Martin Heinzelmann has identified how the author sometimes prominently declared such an assessment in the chapter headings of the *Historiae*.[119] For the earliest instance of this in that work Gregory deployed the term in a telling diptych, juxtaposing Christ's heavenly ascension (not His this-worldly passion) with Pilate and Herod's "perishing," *De ascensione Domini et de interitu Pilati atque Herodis*. Here the author plainly intended readers to apprehend that just as Christ ascended (understand to heaven), so did Pilate and Herod (understand their souls) *interiit*. In the same chapter's narrative, Gregory explained how Christ "was lifted in a cloud up to heaven," while Pilate, because he slew the Lord,

117 Hydatius, *Chronica* s. a. 429, ed. Burgess 90. Others whose *interitus* Hydatius indicated are the Arian king Athanaric, Aetius's foes, Boniface and Valentinian III, and Maldras, a belligerent and treacherous king of the Sueves; Hydatius, *Chronica*, s. a. 381, 432, 455, 460. Hydatius reported of a famine that was so harsh, it caused people to resort to cannibalism and wild animals to feast on human cadavers, as if they "were causing the human race to perish" (*in humani generis efferantur interitum*). This particular episode of carnage prompted the chronicler to declare: "And thus with the four plagues of sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts ravaging everywhere throughout the world, the annunciations foretold by the Lord through his prophets came to fulfillment"; Hydatius, *Chronica* s. a. 410, ed. and trans. by Burgess, 82-83.

118 Unfortunately, Hydatius's corpus is too small to provide a sample size adequate for determining with confidence whether the chronicler intended the word *interitus* to imply a divinely judged individual's otherworldly damnation, or whether he intended readers to imagine that the sudden, violent loss of life itself constituted the punishment. This is not the case for Gregory whose examples establish how he was a firm believer in particular judgment. If in fact Hydatius was a principal source whence the bishop of Tours derived his vocabulary for communicating afterlife, Gregory did not adopt the chronicler's acute pessimism. For Hydatius's impression of an imminent Parousia: Burgess, "Hydatius and the Final Frontier."

119 Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 138, n. 94. Gregory announced a person's soul "perishing" with the phrase *De interitu* in 44 *capitula* of the *Historiae* and in one *capitulum* from *VSJ*.

was "punished" (*non permanens inpunitus*) by killing himself with his own hands.[120] God similarly penalized Herod in response to him persecuting the apostles by causing him to commit suicide.[121] As persecutors of Christ and His apostles, Pilate and Herod represented for Gregory prototypes of the *inimicus ecclesiae*. Gregory expected his references to divine punishment in the chapter's narrative along with the *capitulum*'s telling contrast between the Lord's heavenly *ascensio* and Pilate and Herod's *interitus* to convey for readers the otherworldly truth that the villains' souls have incurred damnation.[122]

The second most frequent term Gregory employed to express a soul's infernal condition upon death is *iudicium*, usually with an accompanying *Dei*.[123] As mentioned above, Gregory used the voice of Saint Salvius of Albi to distinguish between two possible hereafter prospects, entering *in requiem* and *in iudicium*, the latter indicating a judgment that results in damnation.[124] One kind of demise Gregory interpreted as plainly representing a divine judgment is that which God inflicted on both Herod and Pilate, suicide. Further attesting to the author's construal of suicide as a sign of judgment is a paraphrased story derived from Paulinus of Périgueux, wherein Gregory detailed how a man motivated by a demon (*a temptatore commotus*) tried to cut down another in the courtyard of Saint Martin's basilica. The aggressor suddenly turned his anger upon himself, and Gregory concluded: "God's judgment (*Dei iudicium*) followed quickly, and the man stabbed himself [to death] with the sword."[125] Again, Gregory here expected readers to comprehend that an *iudicium Dei* meted in the form of a malefactor's sudden demise deprived a person of the opportunity to cleanse his or her soul of

120 *Historiae* 1.24. Thorpe, *History*, 83, mistranslated Pilate's suicide in his text but mentioned it in a footnote. Cf. Luke 12:1; *Gesta Pilati*.

121 *Historiae* 1.24: "swollen up and swarming with vermin, [Herod] took a knife to cure his disease and killed himself with his own hand"; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 84. Cf. Acts 12:23.

122 Furthermore, the bishop typologically reasoned that anyone who died suddenly after committing crimes comparable to those performed by these archetypal sinners similarly deserved perdition. On the fates of King Chilperic and Queen Austrechildis, both of whom Gregory likened to Herod when recounting their deaths, see below, pp. 255-64.

123 Gregory used *iudicium Dei* in relation to death thirteen times: *Historiae* 2.1, 2.40, 4.25, 2.26, 4.51, 5.5, 5.36, 7.6, 8.30; *VSM* 1.2; *GC* 62; *GM* 71 (x 2). Similar terms applied to people's deaths are *Regis aeterni iudicium*: *Historiae* 5.18; *iudicium divinum*: *Historiae* 1.19, 6.43; *GM* 19; *iudicium*: *Historiae* 2.23; *GM* preface; *VSJ* 17 (x 2). The term *caelestis iudicium* appears in a letter to Saint Radegund preserved in the *Historiae*: *Historiae* 9.39. Gregory used *iudicium Dei* three times in reference to two individuals whose deaths he did not report; *Historiae* 2.4, *GM* 110 (x 2).

124 *Historiae* 7.1. Gregory nowhere recounted a specific instance of a righteous individual entering *in requiem*.

125 *VSM* 1.2; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 203. Cf. Paulinus of Périgueux, *Vita Martini* 6.250-64. Other cases of suicide: *Historiae* 1.24, 25, 2.3, 3.12, 33, 4.39, 5.32, 10.18.

sin. The usual sort of evildoer whom Gregory characterized incurring divine judgment were persons who physically attacked or killed martyrs and confessors, assaulted the saints' churches, possessions and dependents, or otherwise insulted God's friends by committing various sacrilegious actions such as perjury. Gregory sometimes combined the term *iudicium Dei* with what he expected readers to understand as the obvious consequence of a divine judgment, a soul's *interitus*.[126] For example, about Frontinus, who died

126 Gregory used a term for divine judgement six times in reference to people whose deaths he denoted with *interitus*/*interire*, but not in the same sentence. In one instance he deployed the terms back to back; *Historiae* 5.36: *praecurrente iudicio Dei, interiit*. Compare with Hydatius, *Chronica* s. a. 428, cited above, p. 175. One of Gregory's historical models who frequently used the terms *iudicium Dei* and *divinum iudicium* was Orosius. However, whereas Gregory generally employed *iudicium* in reference to an individual expiring, Orosius usually referenced divine judgment when writing in abstract terms about the operations of divine punishment, or God's providence. See Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos* 2.2, 2.3, 2.11, 6.1, 6.5, 7.22, 7.31, 7.35, 7.36, 7.37 (x 2), 7.39, 7.41, 7.42, 7.43. Specific events for which Orosius did deploy the term include Titus's destruction of Jerusalem. He wrote that that emperor "was ordained by the judgment of God to avenge the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ…"; *Historiae adversum paganos* 7.3; trans. by Deferrari, *Seven Books of History*, 289. Orosius likewise declared that by the judgment of God it was determined that the temple at Jerusalem should be razed; *Historiae adversum paganos* 7.9. The historian characterized the emperor Valerian's captivity and humiliation at Shapur's hands as a "manifest judgment of God" (*claro Dei iudicio*); *Historiae adversum paganos* 7.22. Only twice did he use *iudicium* in reference to individuals' demises: Silvius Aremulus *iudicio divino* was struck by lightning, and Mascezel the Moor was killed shortly after desecrating a church; Orosius, *Historiae adversum paganos* 1.20, 7.36. Because Mascezel had prospered when he respected the churches, Orosius concluded that his example "proved that divine judgment ever keeps watch for a twofold purpose, since when [Mascezel] placed his hope in [the church], he was assisted, and when he contemned it, he was killed"; trans. by Deferrari, *Seven Books of History*, 349. Orosius, therefore, was as likely to use terms for divine judgment to indicate divine assistance and favor as to signify divine punishments and vengeance. See also *Historiae adversum paganos* 7.37, 7.43.

Unlike Gregory, Orosius apparently had no desire to deploy a programmatic vocabulary with which to connote individuals' conditions in the hereafter. For Orosius, proving the existence of a perpetual condition of worldly slaughter which began well prior to the Christian era far outweighed any concern to remark on the eternal fates of individual deceased souls. As mentioned above, Orosius only ascribed a future condemnation one time, that to a group of heretics. Specifically, he recounted how Valens "with fatal depravity" (*exitiabili pravitate*) had responded to the Gothic peoples' request for bishops to show them the faith by sending learned people to instruct them in Arianism. It was that very *gens* who killed the emperor by torching a hut upon him. Orosius concluded: "And so, by the just judgment of God, the very men burned him alive who, because of him, will also burn when dead for the vice of error"; trans. by Deferrari, *Seven Books of History*, 340. The historian may have expected his readers to infer from this passage how the Arian emperor experienced a fate identical to that of his anonymous killers. The salient point here is that Orosius did not take the extra step of directly writing that Valens' soul will burn or "perish." Orosius maintained the usual late antique authorial reticence towards stigmatizing individuals through ascriptions of damnation, a trend Gregory would

within a year of poisoning and replacing the bishop of Angoulême, Gregory wrote that "with God's judgment rushing forth, he perished" (*praecurrente iudicio Dei interiit*).[127] By these words Gregory succinctly declared how Frontinus incurred particular judgment and his soul is eternally lost.

A duo whose demises Gregory contrasted in another diptych were King Theudebert and that ruler's tax collector, Parthenius.[128] The *capitulum* for the chapter relating the pair's deaths is entitled *De obitu Theudeberti et de interitu Parthenii*.[129] By use of *de obitu*, which term only represents a person's this-worldly expiration, Gregory eschewed comment on the condition of the king's soul in the chapter heading.[130] Such was not the case for the author's thoughts on the tax collector. Gregory provided the sordid details that led him to reach a conclusion about the latter's fate in the chapter's narrative. Parthenius reportedly wrongly assumed his wife and friend had become intimate and so he caused the two to be murdered. Apparently he paid no legal consequence for this crime. Years later, however, upon King Theudebert's expiration, numerous people from whom Parthenius had spent years squeezing out taxes rioted and sought him out. The man fled to Trier where he hoped two bishops would mollify the crowd on his behalf. Then Parthenius experienced a dream wherein his wife and friend accosted him. Gregory caused Parthenius to speak: "My dear friend Ausanius and my wife Papianilla, both of whom I had murdered, were summoning me to atone for my sins. 'Come and face judgment,' they kept saying, 'for you must reply to the indictments which we propose to bring before the Lord God.'"[131] Direct discourse was one of Gregory's favorite means of highlighting relevant elements of his stories; these include poignant clues about the condition of a character's soul.

When the bishops arrived at Trier, it was all they could do to hide Parthenius inside a trunk located in a church. But the persistent mob located their prey and pulled him from the edifice while giving credit to God. The crowd then beat the tax collector and killed him by stoning (*lapidibus obruerunt*). Gregory concluded the anecdote with a poetic nod to the villain's worst

demolish. On the immediate positive reception of Orosius's *Historiae* and on that work as model for Christian historians: Hillgarth, "*Historiae* of Orosius."

127 *Historiae* 5.36.

128 There was far more to the blue-blooded Parthenius than Gregory's identification of him as a tax-collector; Goffart, *Narrators*, 161; *PLRE* 2, 833-35, s. v., "Parthenius 3."

129 *Historiae* 3.36.

130 But see further on Theudebert's fate below, pp. 224-29.

131 *Historiae* 3.36; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 192. On ghosts in the middle ages: Schmitt, *Les revenants*.

vice; Parthenius was a glutton who gave no thought to who was present whenever he farted: "Therefore, finished off by this kind of departure, he perished (*interiit*)."[132] According to the judicially charged terminology Gregory caused the murdered dream-apparitions to voice, what awaited Parthenius upon his demise was a trial at which the villain had to answer to his accusers' indictments. Corresponding with the announcement provided in the chapter's *capitulum*, Gregory poignantly caused the last word of the narrative to convey his estimation of this judgment's result: Parthenius's soul has "perished."[133]

Another term Gregory reserved for evildoers which is similarly suggestive of divine judgment is *ultio divina*.[134] The earliest individual in the *Historiae* to whose demise Gregory applied this term was the heretical ruler Valens. The *capitulum* introducing Valens' death reads *De interitu Valentis imperatoris*. Gregory's use of this word recalls Jerome's two mentions of Valens' *interitus* in the latter's chronicle. But whereas it is uncertain whether Jerome intended the term to signify something more than divine punishment in the form of a violent death, this is not so for Gregory. The latter related in the chapter's narrative that in the great slaughter (at Adrianople) Valens took an arrow. He hid in a hut which the enemy located and burned down on his head, thus depriving the emperor of a proper burial. Gregory finished: "In this way divine vengeance (*divina ultio*) caught up with him in the end for the blood of the saintly men which he had shed."[135] Our author expected readers to acknowledge from the *capitulum*'s wording, and to deduce from the narrative's details, that the vengeance meted upon this committed heretical murderer of saints in the form of a fiery, hellish demise signified God's unseen judgment, the result of which entailed the villain's soul "perishing." Another heretical ruler to whose demise Gregory attached the term *divina ultio* was the Visigothic King Euric. In his brief consideration of this king, Gregory recorded how Euric marched into southern Gaul where he threatened the region's ecclesiastics, closed its Catholic churches, and even began decapitating all who refused to convert to Arianism. Without

132 *Historiae* 3.36.

133 Gregory was no more supportive of taxes than was the mob that attacked Parthenius. The bishop thought taxation was basically unjust: Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, 108. On taxes and tax-collectors in Gaul: ibid., 105-15; Weidemann, *Kulturgeschichte*, 1: 327-31.

134 On divine vengeance in hagiography: Helvétius, "Le récit de vengeance."

135 *Historiae* 1.41; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 92, slightly modified. Gregory pointed out that he took his account of Valens from Jerome. While the historian did not mention Valens was an Arian, it is doubtful he missed Jerome's acknowledgement of that fact in the chronicle; *contra* Goffart, *Narrators*, 160.

providing any details for how the monarch actually died, Gregory abruptly concluded: "But after not much time the persecutor was stricken by divine vengeance and perished (*ultione divina percussus interiit*)."[136] Gregory's use of *ultio divina* corresponds with that of *iudicium Dei*; he meant both to indicate a deceased person's divine judgment, which invariably entailed a sentence of eternal condemnation. The writer may have omitted details about Euric's demise because he knew, and suspected his readers would know, that the heretical ruler expired neither suddenly nor violently.[137] Gregory's application of *interiit* to Euric's death is one of several examples that reveal how Gregory did not use the term merely to refer to a character dying violently.[138]

A more contemporary occurrence of divine vengeance swiftly administered is that which befell four of five members of Prince Chramn's notorious ring of thugs who terrorized Clermont around the year 555. One sacrilege the gang perpetrated was to rob liturgical clothes and vessels from an oratory containing Saint Saturninus's relics. About the rogues Gregory wrote: "But soon, with divine vengeance following (*insequente ultione divina*), four were killed in fisticuffs [among themselves]."[139] Sometime later the remaining thief, while hiding out at Orléans, started bleeding from his eyes and became painfully blind. He thereupon vowed to restore the goods if God permitted him to recover and he piously wept and prayed, thereby exhibiting true contrition. Afterwards he indeed was healed. Then, *providente Deo* he met a deacon from Clermont through whom he was able to return the goods. This tale indicates how Gregory imagined even a murderous thief could attain forgiveness. The bishop apparently believed the severity of a person's

136 *Historiae* 2.25; *MGH*, SRM 1.1, p. 71. Gregory obtained his details about Euric's persecution for this anecdote from Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistula* 7.6. The writer's mention of the brevity of time between Euric's crimes and his death was meant to help readers appreciate that the demise was the result of divine vengeance. Gregory frequently included specific mentions of the time of death after a person committed an offense as a sign suggestive of divine causation of the demise; e. g., *Historiae* 3.30 (within a year), 4.21 (a year to the day), 8.40 (three days), 9.30 (three days); *VP* 4.3 (three days); *GM* 13 (three days), 19 (within a year), 47 (three days); *GC* 6 (three days), 66 (three days).

137 Nothing in the chronicle tradition suggests Euric did not die peacefully. E. g., *Chronica Gallica* 511, s. a. 484 (666): *Mortuus est Euricus Arelate*; Jordanes, *Getica* 47 (244): *nono decimo anno regni sui vita privatus est*.

138 See also *Historiae* 5.35 for Gregory using *interiit* in reference to a person who died of dysentery. Not only was this death not violent, it was not premature either, as evidenced by the fact that the woman had already produced children. As with Euric, Gregory was not forthcoming about the death of the Arian king, Gundobad of Burgundy, who it seems also died peaceably. Nevertheless, Gregory remarked that he *interiit* and further commented that he lost his soul.

139 *GM* 65; trans. based on Van Dam, *Martryrs*, 90.

crimes was less an obstacle to salvation than the time God allotted for one to make amends. Gregory wished readers to realize it was imperative for sinners to become contrite, strive to excel in virtuous behavior, and expiate sins. Who knows if the pugnacious survivor persisted on the march along a path of righteousness up to the point of his death? About the other four thieves, Gregory expected readers to understand that the fatal form of swift vengeance Saint Saturninus and God rendered unto them assured the immediate damnation of their sinful souls.

Lessons and Warnings for Contemporaries

In the *GM* Gregory recounted two stories about members of King Sigibert's armed forces who committed sacrileges at Saint Dionysius's basilica during the Austrasian army's campaigns around Paris in 574 and 575. The first tale recounts how one of the king's retainers died not a year after stealing the martyr's sacred shroud off his tomb (even though the villain returned the relic). The next anecdote succinctly details what happened when a second soldier turned thief entered the same basilica:

> Another man was not afraid to step on the holy tomb while he wished to strike with his spear at the gold dove [attached to the tomb]. Because there was a tower on top of the tomb, the man's feet slipped on each side. He crushed his testicles, stabbed himself in the side with his spear, and was found dead (*exanimis*). Let no one doubt that this happened not by chance, but by the judgement of God (*iudicio Dei*).[140]

Here Gregory economically accomplished his pastoral objective of providing yet another negative example of conduct his readers should avoid; he intended them to realize that the sudden *iudicium* deprived the *inimicus ecclesiae* any further chance to repent and therefore cost him his soul. Our author probably expected his audience to chortle over the details of this divinely instigated demise.[141] Apparently Gregory thought

140 *GM* 71; trans. by Van Dam, *Martyrs*, 95, with my italics.

141 This sophomoric virtual sight gag has always been one of my favorites. Another sort of humor Gregory apparently enjoyed displaying in association with images of death was scatology, or sub-scatology as Danuta Shanzer puts it; Shanzer, "Laughter and Humour," 28. Our author may or may not have intended a straight delivery when he several times revisited the popular motif of the arch-heretic Arius dying by pouring out his innards while relieving himself. (The story originated with Rufinus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 10.13.) But it is very likely

it best to put comedic scenes in the *Miracula* rather than the *Historiae*. Consider, for example, a comparison of the two aforementioned accounts of earthquakes. In the *Miracula* Gregory's story about the goldsmith and accomplice whose get-rich scheme ended with the earth opening and the pair falling *viventes ac vociferantes in tartarum* bears a cartoonish quality about it. But the tale from the *Historiae* wherein thirty monks were buried alive while greedily accumulating metals from a ruined fortress reads as a strictly somber account. Even though the goldsmith's story ostensibly dates to the fifth century, it has a timeless fairy-tale quality to it, whereas the monks' tale dates to 563 and reads matter-of-factly, as does Gregory's account of the plague at Clermont in 571 which follows in the same chapter. Furthermore, what few comedic episodes involving death there are in the *Historiae* seem to congregate in the work's earlier books.[142] Undoubtedly a principal reason for this lies in the fact that many of the individuals whom Gregory depicted dying prematurely and violently in the *Historiae*'s later books were acquaintances of the author. Gregory stigmatized individuals by impugning their character and intimating their fates even while he was anticipating that the first generation of his readers would include people who were familiars, even former colleagues, of the villains. Gregory's intention was to memorialize these wicked people in order to encourage the living

Gregory wished to produce at least a knowing grin on readers' faces when he related in a hagiographical anecdote in *Historiae* 2 how a priest, at the very moment he was in the privy plotting to murder his own bishop, Sidonius Apollinaris, exhaled his spirit while trying to empty his bowels; *Historiae* 2.23. Gregory commented that the image of the man sitting dead on the loo left no doubt (*indubitatum est*) that he committed no less an offense than the crimes of Arius. Gregory further associated the priest with Arius by declaring that the disobedience he exhibited towards the prelate, and his effort to supplant his superior, amounted to heresy. On Gregory's use of this anecdote to stress the role of bishops in governing Christian society; Heinzelmann, "Heresy in Books," 72-73.

Gregory registered a second comedic anecdote drawing from the Arius-death motif, this one involving a heretic proper, in the *GM*. There he described how an Arian husband with a Catholic wife invited both of their priests to a feast. The host conspired with his own priest in advance so that every time a serving of food was delivered to the table, the heretic cleric blessed it, thereby causing the Catholics to refuse to eat. The Arian priest continued his mocking effort to the fourth serving when he hurriedly shoved a bite of food into in his mouth. Gregory wrote: "Suddenly his chest felt on fire and he began to writhe. Then, producing a loud fart with a massive gust he exhaled his wicked spirit (*nequam spiritum exalavit*)"; *GM* 79; trans. based on Van Dam, *Martyrs*, 104. Compare *Historiae* 3.36 for *strepitus ventris* to mean flatulence. See also Shanzer, "History, Romance, Love, and Sex," 408-09. Gregory next recounted how the corpse was removed and buried in a shallow grave. After gleefully (*exultans*) remarking how God had taken vengeance on his servants' behalf, the Catholic priest finally looked upon his forlorn host and demanded he bring him something to eat!

142 *Historiae* 2.27, 2.40-42.

among his society's elites, along with their progeny, to reject the vice-laden paths of their eternally condemned early contemporaries.

One royal official who served as a negative moral example for Gaul's elites was the first of Chilperic's dukes to assail the Touraine after Sigibert's demise in 575, Roccolen. In the *Historiae* Gregory related that after Roccolen ordered his soldiers to dismantle one of Martin's churches and trample its fields, the duke was "struck by God" (*a Deo percutitur*) and contracted jaundice.[143] As his condition worsened, Roccolen relocated to Poitiers which he planned to capture. But the day before he was to launch the attack the duke died (*animam reddedit*), thereby ending his "swollen pride" (*superbia tumorque*).[144] Interestingly, Gregory did not entitle the chapter recounting the duke's demise *De interitu Roccoleni*; instead the *capitulum* merely reads *Quod Roccolenus Turonus venit*.[145] Three chapters prior, however, Gregory followed up a separate anecdote by mentioning how Roccolen marched a force on Tours where he seized properties and committed crimes. To this the writer added: "We shall remember in a later section how on account of performing such evil deeds [the duke] was struck by the power of blessed Martin and perished" (*a virtute beati Martini … percussus interiit*).[146] Furthermore, in a chapter of *VSM* 2 which revisits Roccolen's assault on the city, Gregory characterized the duke's sufferings from jaundice as "the infirmities of Herod" (*infirmitatibus Herodianis*) before reporting that fifty days after contracting the disease Roccolen, bloated by dropsy, "perished" (*interiit*).[147]

143 At the advice of others (i. e., not through his own contrition) the flagging duke ventured into Tours for celebration of Epiphany. Roccolen was drawn in a litter behind a horse during the procession from Gregory's cathedral to Martin's basilica, but the saint balked at providing him a cure; *Historiae* 5.4.

144 *Historiae* 5.4. Gregory intended his mention that Roccolen expired with his soul weighed down by the vice of *supurbia* as a clue to the sinful condition of the duke's soul just prior to the moment of his death. The term he used to report Roccolen's demise, *animam reddedit*, is not one the author intended to intimate a soul "perishing."

145 *Historiae* 5.4.

146 *Historiae* 5.1.

147 *VSM* 2.27 is entitled *De muliere paralytica*. In that chapter Gregory expanded on the tale by relating how the duke while pillaging the Touraine sent messengers to threaten he would burn everything unless Tours' clerics expelled the sanctuary seeker, Guntram Boso. In this version of the story Gregory presented himself responding to the threatening circumstance in his usual way, by praying for a saint's aid. After appealing to Saint Martin for help, a woman paralyzed for a dozen years straightaway was healed. If at the time the bishop actually encouraged this miracle in an effort to intimidate the duke with a display of Martin's *virtus*, Roccolen was not impressed, for it was at this point that he advanced his troops to the Loire and established a headquarters directly opposite the city. Gregory omitted from the account in *VSM* how Roccolen, once stricken with jaundice, participated in the Epiphany procession to Martin's basilica; *Historiae* 5.4. The

Thus, in an out-of-the-way chapter of the *Historiae* and in the narrative of a book from the *Miracula*, Gregory likened Roccolen's divinely wrought punishment to that of the prototypical *inimicus ecclesiae* Herod; he described the duke exhibiting a sin-induced unsightly complexion at death; and he offered two mentions of *interire* to inform readers that Roccolen's soul has "perished." The example of Gregory's writings about Roccolen's demise reveals how our author expected readers, some of them at least, to delve deep into his text to get the full story on certain characters' fates, rather than merely peruse *capitula* and single chapters.

An antagonist who proved a more enduring problem than Roccolen was Count Leudast. Although this royal agent opposed Gregory for as many as seven years, the author condensed the story of his sinful ways into a three-chapter spool at *Historiae* 5.47 to 5.49 followed by an account of his woeful death at *Historiae* 6.32. Gregory introduced Leudast to readers at *Historiae* 5.46 by recounting how King Chilperic dismissed him from office, after which Leudast alleged that the bishop of Tours was spreading rumors that Queen Fredegund was sleeping with Bishop Bertram of Bordeaux.[148] Chilperic responded to the accusation by having the former count beaten and imprisoned. Gregory went back in time in the next chapter to lay out the case for Leudast's wickedness (*malitia*).[149] It was only when the rebellious

writer tucked an ironic, and probably comedic, treat for readers to find at the end of the two accounts about Roccolen's demise. While at *VSM* 2.27 he reported that Roccolen perished while he was "swollen by dropsy" (*ab hydrope conflatus*), in the *Historiae* he noted how death ended the duke's "swollen pride" (*superbia tumorque*).

148 *Historiae* 5.47. Because Leudast persisted in scheming against the citizenry of Tours and committing crimes against its churches, King Chilperic finally allowed the city's exasperated populace to select a new count, and they chose Eunomius. Upon Leudast's deposition he sought an audience with Chilperic and initially accused Gregory of plotting to turn the city over to Childebert II. When the king dismissed that charge out of hand, only then did Leudast claim Gregory was spreading slander by putting it out that Queen Fredegund was taking to bed with Bishop Bertram of Bordeaux. Gregory later reported that Bishop Palladius of Saintes accused Bertram of committing adultery and fornication; *Historiae* 8.7. On Gregory's intention to make readers believe the bishop of Bordeaux was an adulterer: Shanzer, "History, Romance, Love, and Sex," 404-05.

149 In *Historiae* 5.48, which is entitled *De malitia Leudastis*, Gregory described how Leudast had first served as Tours' count under King Charibert, after rising through the ranks of that ruler's household, from kitchen slave to baker, to horse groomer, to stable master and queen's favorite. Leudast's father had been a slave and tended the royal vineyards. Gregory reported that Leudast ran away several times while assigned to food preparation duties. On one occasion he was caught and marked with a slit to the ear. It is interesting that Gregory, who celebrated whenever individuals from the lowest social stations attained sainthood, and who championed the humble poor who were hampered by powerful elites, was willing to deploy mention of low social status to calumniate certain individuals like Leudast. Gregory did not specifically criticize

Prince Merovech left sanctuary at Saint Martin's basilica in 577, taking much of Leudast's wealth with him, that the rapacious count turned against Gregory, blaming him for supporting the prince. Gregory ended *Historiae* 5.48 by mentioning how Leudast swore an oath on Saint Martin's cloak that he would never again oppose the city's bishop. This sentence sets up the action of the following chapter on Leudast's failed conspiracy to remove Gregory from Tours' cathedra, which culminates in the latter's trial in 580.[150] Gregory opened *Historiae* 5.49 with a declaration that he would address how divine vengeance (*ultio divina*) descended on the count, thereby fulfilling two biblical prophecies including Proverbs 26:27: "Whoever digs a pit will fall into it." Next the author traced Leudast's actions from the moment he began conspiring against the bishop prior to his own arrest up to Gregory's trial.[151] At the latter King Chilperic presided over an assemblage of bishops at the royal estate of Berny. Bishop Bertram of Bordeaux led the interrogation

Leudast for his early efforts to flee his masters. Elsewhere, the writer exhibited support for slaves who tried to escape from secular masters in order to embark on religious careers. Unlike those pious individuals, Leudast sought social advancement by fleeing to Queen Marcovefa. It was she who transferred Leudast to the stables and abetted his acquisition of high secular offices. Gregory elsewhere recorded how Marcovefa died while under excommunication after marrying her sister's husband; see below, p. 246. Otherwise, Gregory attributed Leudast's appointment as count of Tours to the people's sins (*peccatis populi*). He numbered greed, arrogance, bravado, and wantonness among the sins the count exhibited during his first run in the office. After Charibert's death in 567 Sigibert removed Leudast as count of Tours, but when Chilperic's son, Prince Theudebert, momentarily occupied the city, he convinced Gregory to restore him. The count reportedly acted humbly towards the bishop and Saint Martin at that time, but he had to flee when Sigibert regained the city. Leudast hid in Brittany until Sigibert's assassination in late 575, after which King Chilperic reassigned him to the post. From that point onwards Leudast acted arrogantly. He reportedly wore armor and donned weapons while inside the churches. He treated the laypeople and clerics cruelly while conducting his judicial responsibilities. From 576 Chilperic expected Leudast to remove the rebellious Prince Merovech from sanctuary in Martin's basilica. Although the count failed to accomplish this task, he kept his position after Merovech abandoned asylum of his own volition the following year.

150 *Historiae* 5.49: *De insidiis, quas nobis fecit.*

151 After being incarcerated by Chilperic when the king did not accept his claim that Gregory was spreading a rumor about Fredegund committing adultery, the former count was released after he testified that it was a sub-deacon from Tours named Riculf who originated the slanderous accusation. In the year prior to his imprisonment Leudast began conspiring with the sub-deacon and with a priest named Riculf to oust the city's bishop. At first Leudast and the priest schemed to lure Gregory into helping spirit the junior Riculf to another kingdom without Chilperic's knowledge, for which act they could accuse the bishop of treason. According to testimony later gathered through the sub-deacon's torture, the plot was supposed to end with Chilperic's son Clovis becoming sole ruler of Neustria after encompassing his brothers' murders. Clovis was then supposed to elevate his longtime friend, the priest Riculf, as bishop of Tours, while the sub-deacon was to become archdeacon.

of his fellow ecclesiastic, and Gregory fended off the allegation that he had initiated the slanderous rumor about Fredegund. In the end Chilperic deferred to the advice of the gathered prelates who permitted Gregory to prove his innocence by conducting mass at three separate altars. The bishops placed blame for the slander on Leudast and excommunicated him, while Chilperic declared him an outlaw.[152] Gregory left it for readers of *Historiae* 5.49 to connect how every calumny the count made against the bishop constituted a infringement of the vows Leudast had made to Saint Martin that he would never oppose the ecclesiastic. At this stage in the Leudast saga the *ultio divina* God had inflicted on the wretch was of a this-worldly variety; there was still time for the former count to rectify his ways.

Gregory only returned to the count's tale thirty-three chapters later, at *Historiae* 6.32, entitled *De interitu Leudastis*. Herein the writer detailed how four years later Leudast became overly confident after King Chilperic had remitted his criminal status and some bishops had restored him to communion. Against the king's advice, and that of Bishop Gregory, too, Leudast sought out Queen Fredegund to beg her pardon for his part in the slanderous rumor.[153] The former count first encountered the queen in the cathedral at

After his release from prison Leudast returned to Tours and caused Gregory's archdeacon Plato and his friend Galienus to be arrested on Easter Saturday. He hoped to cause the pair to admit under torture to the bishop's alleged crime. Leudast carried away the two clerics in chains, prompting the anxious bishop to read a random passage from the Psalms, which provided him comfort. The divine message at Psalm 78: 53 was confirmed when Gregory learned how the ferry transporting Leudast across a river sank while the vessel holding his two friends stayed afloat. Although Leudast survived the auspicious, nearly fatal incident, he did not receive the outcome he hoped by taking the clerics before the king. For although Chilperic initially determined the pair must die, he subsequently decided only to keep them under house arrest.

152 During his time as an outlaw Leudast's only son died and his wife was exiled. The sub-deacon Riculf was tortured mercilessly; after confessing his role in the plot, his broken body was handed over to Gregory's care. Gregory returned to Tours and eventually removed the priest Riculf from the city. Royal agents twice deprived Leudast of possessions he had pilfered from Tours' *pauperes*. In one instance he claimed sanctuary at Saint Hilary's basilica at Poitiers, but he was forced to abandon it through the efforts of Queen Fredegund, who acted in response to rumors he was sating his lust in that church; *Historiae* 5.49.

153 Before the rogue embarked on his fateful trip to Paris to try to secure pardon, Gregory consulted with Leudast, begging him to wait for Fredegund's anger to subside. He characterized this advice as given *pro Dei intuitu simpliciter*; *Historiae* 6.32. Despite the potential for self-aggrandizement in this scene, perhaps one should be inclined to accept Gregory's word here. The aristocratic bishop imagined Leudast as a former slave who was ever trying to improve himself, but had gone about it the wrong way. Despite myriad past transgressions, God provided Leudast the opportunity to start rectifying his conduct. Gregory intended readers to recognize his own final meeting with Leudast as one such providentially given chance for the count to awaken to the need to expunge his sins. Leudast, however, was too suspicious to heed his bishop's warning.

Paris. There the angry and disconsolate woman pleaded for her husband to expel the man from the church, which was done. Afterwards Leudast trailed after the royal couple down the city's streets. While he was shopping and distracted, the queen's thugs tried to capture him. Leudast struck one of the party with his sword, which caused his enemies in turn to arm themselves and attack. One sword blow took away most of Leudast's hair and skin on his head. While trying to flee he broke his leg. Upon his capture Chilperic ordered that doctors tend to him, but only so that he could be taken alive to an estate to be subjected to a lasting torture. When it finally seemed Leudast could no longer survive his "rotting wounds" (*conputriscentibus plagis*), Fredegund herself reportedly ordered a last humiliation. Gregory wrote: "thrown to the floor, with an immense pole placed at his neck, they beat on his throat with another stick. And so this person who led an ever-faithless life ended it with a just death" (*Sicque semper perfidam agens vitam, iusta morte finivit*).[154] Here Gregory followed up a seemingly realistic depiction of Leudast's gruesome demise with an understated contrast of the villain's "faithless life" and "just death." Of course, Gregory expected readers to accept his assessment, announced in the chapter's *capitulum*, that Leudast's soul "perished." Despite this estimation of the lifelong brute's deserved eternal loss, whatever animus Gregory once harbored for him perhaps had melted into a sense of utter pity by the time of Leudast's final months. For Gregory explained that he himself had tried to dissuade Leudast from seeking out Fredegund. By setting out for Paris, not only did Leudast endanger himself, he chose to reject the bishop's counsel to tread a spiritual path. Through his decision to remain committed to his this-worldly slog, Leudast squandered this last merciful, God-given opportunity and marched himself towards divine judgment. If in fact Gregory felt personally sorry for the count, this emotion did not prevent him as writer from fulfilling his pastoral obligation by memorializing Leudast in hopes that other elites would reject his example of utter secularity, which only leads to perdition.

Gregory spent the last ten years of his life with his diocese reunited to the Austrasian realm under King Childebert II. Therefore, courtiers and royal officials from the Austrasian kingdom presumably constituted a special element among Gaul's elites whom the writer hoped to reach with his soul-saving messages through the *Historiae*. One Austrasian magnate whose negative example Gregory probably thought worse than Leudast's was Duke Rauching. Gregory assured the wickedness of the duke's personality from

154 *Historiae* 6.32. For a proposal that Gregory's description of Leudast shopping at Paris plays off a scene from one of Sidonius Apollinaris's letters: Pizzaro, "Gregory of Tours," 354-61.

the outset; he characterized Rauching as prideful and arrogant and detailed how he delighted in physically abusing his own slaves and dependents.[155] The lead up to Rauching's expiration reflects the dangerous nature of political maneuverings common to late sixth-century Frankish Gaul. Gregory fretted that factional manipulations contributed to an atmosphere wherein courtiers all too eagerly succumbed to temptations of worldly gain and neglected the pursuits of virtues and repentance. As a duke in service to Childebert II, Rauching had loyally aided the Austrasian cause in 585 when he apprehended two assassins whom Fredegund had sent to kill the king and his mother Brunhild.[156] But in 587 Rauching opted to conspire against the same king by allying with two Neustrian magnates, ostensibly to bring an end to animosities between the two realms. According to the plot, Rauching was to murder King Childebert, after which he would exert control over the king's elder son, Theudebert, while taking direct rule over Champagne for himself.[157] As it happened King Guntram learned of Rauching's bid for power and posthaste informed his royal nephew. The latter summoned the duke and ordered agents to start confiscating his property simultaneous with his arrival at court. Gregory described Rauching's bloody dispatch as follows: "[Childebert's men] fell upon him with their swords. They cut and

155 One of the most famous grim jokes contained in the *Historiae* comes from the speech of Rauching. The tale goes that the duke once demanded of a priest that two slaves whom the latter had joined in marriage be returned to him. Before the very altar of the wary cleric's church Rauching promised he would not separate the couple, and he even assured they would stay close together. As soon as the duke carried the duo home, he ordered his men to bury them alive with the man laying atop the woman. Gregory caused the devious duke to declare: "I have not broken my promise … for I swore that they should never be separated"; *Historiae* 5.3; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 257.

Sardonic jokes were one kind of humor that had entered into late ancient histories which Gregory exhibited in his own text; Shanzer, "Laughter and Humour," 30-31. Another famous episode from the *Historiae* with humor of this sort depicts a Frank soldier rejecting King Clovis's pious request to remove a large silver vase from a quantity of booty so it can be restored to a bishop who had asked for its return. Incensed that the king asked for more than his proper share, the Frank bashed the vessel with a blow of his axe. Clovis did not react immediately, but a year later, when the king lined up his troops to inspect their dress and gear, he rebuked the very soldier and threw his weapon to the ground. As the latter bent down to retrieve the item Clovis cleaved his skull with an axe and commented, "This is how you treated the vase at Soissons"; *Historiae* 2.27. For more on this axe in the skull motif, see pp. 208, 212, 214.

156 *Historiae* 8.29.

157 *Historiae* 9.9. Rauching's accomplices, Ursio and Berthefried, planned to control Childebert's younger son, Theuderic, and manage the remainder of the realm. The conspirators also planned to deprive Queen Brunhild of her influence. A further chilling element of the plot for Gregory was that the king's assassination was to be blamed on a deputation of visiting Tourangeaux and Poitevins, who in fact were present at Childebert's court on the day of Rauching's death.

sliced his head this way and that until the whole of his brains were exposed. He died (*mortuus est*) immediately. He was stripped naked and flung out through the window."[158] Following this description of the duke's ignominious demise, Gregory listed Rauching's vices, which included greed, covetousness, and arrogance. The author noted that a tally of the duke's moveable wealth compared favorably with what was contained in the king's treasury. Gregory attributed this wealth as the cause for Rauching declaring late in life that he was one of King Chlothar I's sons: servitude to one vice would only breed another. Gregory credited God with thwarting the conspirators' *iniqua consilia*, and he characterized their failure as fulfilling the biblical maxim, "Whoever digs a pit for his brother will fall into it."[159] Correspondent with the violent death of this unrepentant sinner, Gregory announced Rauching's infernal fate in the *capitulum* for *Historiae* 9.9, *De interitu Rauchingi*.[160]

Another Austrasian magnate representative of society's elites whom Gregory was trying to steer clear from the pitfalls associated with the high politics of secular life while trying to guide them onto a path of righteousness was Duke Guntram Boso. In an episode from *VSM* 2, Gregory favorably recalled that in 575 the duke confidently invoked Saint Martin's name when adverse winds caused the boats on which his army was crossing the Loire to sink.[161] The confessor responded to the magnate's respectful appeal by reversing the winds and so all lives were spared. It was probably not long after this miracle happened that Guntram Boso, then in King Sigibert's service, joined with another duke and led their troops in an attack on Chilperic's son, Theudebert, during which battle the prince died.[162] When Sigibert was assassinated shortly after, Guntram Boso sought sanctuary at Saint Martin's basilica since Chilperic blamed him for his

158 *Historiae* 9.9; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 490.

159 *Historiae* 9.9, quoting Proverbs 26:27 again. Compare Ecclesiastes 10:8. Gregory cited this passage four times in his corpus: *Historiae* 2.40, 4.51, 5.49, 9.9. Each reference pertains to an individual dying after conspiring versus another. On Gregory's sense of poetic justice and his use of this expression: Monroe, "*Via Iustitiae*," 106-107.

160 One version of the *Historiae* adds Ursio's name to the *capitulum* alongside that of Rauching; Krusch, ed., *MGH* SRM 1.1, 412.

161 *VSM* 2.17. About the date of this miracle, Gregory situated this story three chapters after a miracle dateable to July 575 and seven chapters prior to one dated to November 575, but one chapter following a miracle dated to Epiphany 576. It seems most plausible that the episode happened in 575 prior to Sigibert's demise late in the year, after which Guntram Boso sought asylum at Saint Martin's church. The duke most likely shared the story with Gregory while he was holed up in the basilica. Gregory did not allow his personal dislike of a person to stand in the way of him registering in one of his books that individual's account of a saint performing a miracle. See, e. g., *GC* 43, 77, *GM* 33, all of which originate from bishops whom Gregory despised.

162 *Historiae* 4.50.

son's death.[163] Chilperic's rebellious son Merovech joined Guntram Boso in sanctuary sometime in 576.[164] Gregory was not impressed by what he perceived as the duke's sinful and gullible reliance on a female seer.[165] In 577 Guntram Boso opted to abandon asylum at Tours alongside Merovech. By doing so he broke an oath given at the altar of Saint Martin's basilica whereby he promised Chilperic he would not leave the city without first procuring the king's consent.[166] Guntram Boso showed himself additionally untrustworthy in 578 when he apparently conspired with Bishop Aegidius of Reims and organized the ambush which finally did Prince Merovech to death.[167]

Guntram Boso participated with members of a cabal of Austrasian and Burgundian magnates in the late sixth-century Gallic cause célèbre called the "Gundovald Affair," a conspiracy to elevate the pretender Gundovald, who claimed to be a son of King Chlothar I.[168] Presumably it was not long

163 *Historiae* 5.4.

164 *Historiae* 5.14.

165 Because Guntram Boso was convinced the woman had accurately predicted the moment of King Charibert's demise in late 567, he placed confidence in her prediction that Prince Merovech would succeed his father as the sole ruler of the Neustrian realm and that he would become Merovech's leading general, and the bishop of Tours after that. The failure for Chilperic to expire around 576/577 apparently dampened the duke's enthusiasm for the woman's prediction, for at some point he decided to attempt a scheme to kill off the prince as was suggested to him by Queen Fredegund. Guntram Boso convinced Merovech to travel with him outside of Tours where the latter was to be ambushed. As it happened the queen's assassins never materialized, and the two men returned to Martin's basilica with Merovech none the wiser.

166 Later in the year Guntram Boso rode into Tours with an armed band to retrieve his daughters whom he had left at the basilica and transfer them to Saint-Hilary's at Poitiers; *Historiae* 5.24. In 578 Guntram Boso was again in the process of retrieving his daughters when he encountered Duke Dracolen the Zealous, whose practice it was to hunt down men on King Chilperic's behalf. Although Guntram Boso had once made a pact with Dracolen, the latter betrayed him, intending to bring the duke alive to Chilperic. Gregory reported that during the ensuing fight Guntram Boso again appealed to Saint Martin, this time at the very moment when Dracolen was charging his horse towards his prey. As it happened the aggressor broke his spear and dropped his sword, and Guntram Boso ran Dracolen's throat through with a pike. What else could Gregory do except to interpret this incident as flagrantly signifying how Martin had thrown his support behind one duke over the other? In the process of recounting how Dracolen previously had captured and killed another of Chilperic's dukes, Dacco, Gregory established for readers that Dracolen was a habitual perjurer. Gregory did not identify what saints if any the duke dishonored by breaking his oaths. But the author did regard Dracolen's saint-assisted demise to entail an infernal judgment; he entitled *Historiae* 5.25, *De interitu Dacconis et Dracoleni*.

167 *Historiae* 5.18.

168 On the Gundovald Affair: Bachrach, *Anatomy of a Little War*; Esders, "Gallic Politics," 442-45; Goffart, "Byzantine Policy"; idem, "Frankish Pretender"; Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 93-101; Nonn, "*Ballomeris quidam*"; Zuckerman, "Qui a rappelé."

after 578 that Guntram Boso and Bishop Aegidius started conspiring with King Guntram's best military commander, the patrician Mummolus, to prop up the pretender. It was Guntram Boso who traveled on the cabal's behalf to retrieve the pretender from Constantinople in 582. No sooner was the task completed than the duke exhibited his distrustful demeanor by framing one of the lesser players in the conspiracy, Bishop Theodore of Marseilles, and arresting him for inviting the pretender to Gaul. Guntram Boso then grabbed Gundovald's ample treasure and split it with one of King Guntram's dukes.[169] In 583 Guntram Boso eluded death after King Guntram captured him along with his wife and children. To convince the king it was not he who introduced the pretender to Gaul, Guntram Boso agreed to lead a military force which attempted, unsuccessfully as it happened, to capture the king's treacherous former general Mummolus at Avignon.[170] Guntram Boso receives not a single mention in Gregory's considerably drawn out description of the climax to the Gundovald Affair, the siege of Comminges in mid-585, where many magnates who had remained loyal to Gundovald, including the patrician Mummolus, "perished" along with the hapless pretender.[171] But Gregory

169 *Historiae* 6.24. Guntram Boso stored his portion of this treasure at Clermont. In developing the tale of the Gundovald Affair, Gregory allowed knowledge of elements of the conspiracy to unfold in his text to mirror how he gradually learned of the developments in real time. The author did not divulge that it was Guntram Boso who retrieved Gundovald from Constantinople at *Historiae* 6.24. He then presented King Guntram accusing the duke of fetching the pretender at *Historiae* 6.26. Only at *Historiae* 7.32 did he confirm Guntram Boso was the perpetrator.

170 King Guntram's men captured Guntram Boso and his family while the latter was riding from King Childebert II's court to check on his lucre at Clermont. To convince the king he was not involved in bringing Gundovald to Gaul, Guntram Boso swore he would help capture Mummolus. With levies drawn from the Auvergne and Le Velay, plus a contingent of regulars provided by the king, Guntram Boso marched to Avignon. He twice survived nearing drowning in the Rhone by virtue of Mummulus's devious traps. Guntram Boso initiated a siege of the city. But the duke had not requested his own sovereign's permission to wage this campaign, and so when Childebert learned of it, he sent Duke Gundulf, Gregory's great-uncle, to demand that the assault be lifted; *Historiae* 6.26. After King Chiperic's death in 584, Guntram Boso was back in Childebert's good graces again when he served as an envoy along with Bishop Aegidius and others to Guntram's court. There the older king again accused Guntram Boso of bringing the pretender to Gaul and again the duke asserted his innocence; *Historiae* 7.14.

171 Comminges: *Historiae* 7.34-41. Note the titles of the following *capitula*: *De interitu Gundovaldi*: *Historiae* 7.38; *De interitu Sagittari et Mummoli*: *Historiae* 7.39. At Comminges, Mummolus realized all was for naught and so he betrayed Gundovald to the city's attackers in exchange for his life. But Mummolus too was betrayed and he fought his assailants unto his death. One of Gundovald's early supporters who abandoned the pretender prior to Comminges was Duke Desiderius, who was killed in battle a year later. Gregory entitled the chapter on his death, *De interitu Desiderii ducis*; *Historiae* 8.45.

Phillip Wynn, "Wars and Warriors," 29-31, characterized Mummolus as one of Gregory's "divinely-favored warriors" in the tradition of King Clovis and Duke Buccelin. Gregory depicted

revisited Guntram Boso's sordid story by reporting that later in the same year the duke tarnished his reputation at court by slipping away from Childebert's presence after a charge was leveled that he had committed grave-robbery.[172] It was not long after this that Childebert II survived Rauching and company's murderous coup in 587. Thanks to Guntram tipping him off, the younger king began working more closely with his uncle. It was this collaboration which enabled King Guntram to effect Guntram Boso's undoing for once and for all. When the two monarchs met at Trier in 587, Guntram Boso dutifully accompanied his lord. The bishop on whom the duke depended for surety, however, was prevented from going to the city. At Trier the kings agreed to sentence Guntram Boso to death for his crimes. Upon hearing the news, the duke fled to Bishop Magneric's abode and demanded his aid.[173] Magneric managed to narrowly escape his captor, and Guntram Boso exited the building, whereupon he was met by a hail of javelins. Opponents finally ran the duke through with spears affixing him in such a way that his corpse remained standing. As he had done with Rauching, Gregory followed up his narrative for Guntram Boso's demise with an accounting of his moral

Mummolus as late as 574 receiving divine aid during a war in which he expelled three Lombard war-leaders and their invading armies from Gaul; *Historiae* 4.44. A first criticism of the general arises when Gregory recorded that after killing five-thousand soldiers belonging to one of Chilperic's dukes in 576, the patrician's army despoiled the vicinity of Clermont while marching back to Burgundy; *Historiae* 5.13. Gregory provided the first hint of Mummulus's habit of unfaithfulness by reporting how he suddenly abandoned King Guntram's service in 581; *Historiae* 6.1. Mummolus's treachery is fully revealed at *Historiae* 6.24, which details how the pretender Gundovald, on arrival to Gaul from Constantinople, joined the patrician at Avignon. After Chilperic's death in 584, Mummolus accompanied Gundovald from Avignon and was present when the pretender was elevated as king; *Historiae* 7.10. Gregory depicted how Mummolus beat and robbed the bishop of Toulouse, after which he sliced off a piece of the finger-bone of the martyr Sergius to keep for himself, thereby incurring the saint's lasting ire; *Historiae* 7.27, 31. Mummolus, therefore, went from an "ever-victorious" general at *Historiae* 4.45 to a hellmate deserving of his fate by virtue of his own treachery, cruelty, and sacrilege at *Historiae* 7.39. He provided Gregory with a prime example of just how far a talented and celebrated royal official could fall from God's grace.

172 Specifically, Guntram Boso had joined the bishop of Metz in leading the city's populace on a pilgrimage outside the city. Then, taking advantage of the people's absence, he sent some of his men to retrieve valuables from the tomb of a recently deceased, female in-law, who had just been laid to rest inside a church. Not only did Guntram Boso lose the movables he left behind when he quickly abandoned the king's court after being accused of the sacrilege, Childebert also ordered the seizure of all the Auvergnat properties the duke had been awarded from the fisc; *Historiae* 8.21.

173 Guntram Boso put a sword to Bishop Magneric and threatened that if he did not secure his pardon, the two of them would assuredly die together. After the bishop's deputies related messages to King Guntram, the angry ruler, showing no regard for Magneric's safety, ordered the building to be set afire. The bishop's clerics charged inside the domicile and spirited their prelate to safety; *Historiae* 9.10.

shortcomings. These included greed, covetousness, and a habit of breaking his word. Gregory reported how it was discovered that Guntram Boso, like Rauching, had hoarded a huge mass of treasure. To this he added that the reprobate buried much of his wealth whenever he felt guilty for his sins.[174] Gregory completed his indictment with a final, disdainful reminder of how the duke relied on fortunetellers.[175] Of course, he entitled the chapter about the worldly-obsessed magnate's demise *De interitu Guntchramni Bosonis*.

174 Perhaps Gregory intended to insinuate that the duke thought he could avoid a divine penalty by hiding his ill-gotten lucre from God's eyes.

175 Gregory's pastoral concern to denigrate soothsayers was akin to that exhibited by Caesarius of Arles. Caesarius hoped to lure congregants to his churches by promising that at those venues people could join in rituals administered by priests such as the rite of anointing the sick, through which they would receive both bodily and spiritual health; Paxton, *Christianizing Death*, 50-51. Caesarius complemented his campaign to legitimize his priest-centered, holistic remedy for people's ills by disparaging those who partook in alternative practices such as frequenting traditional folk healers and sacred spaces in search of physical succor. The bishop derided the latter activities as impious, pagan, and demonically inspired. He asserted that pursuing such alternatives was so sinful, it negated all the benefits one accrued from penitent exertions at churches; e. g., Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo* 54.1-5. Caesarius marshalled the rhetoric of hell into his body- and soul-cleansing program for example by charging that those who refused to destroy sacred trees on their properties behaved so wickedly, they "cast themselves into hell"; *Sermo* 54.5; trans. by Mueller, *St. Caesarius*, 2: 269.

Although Gregory did not promote the same kind of anointing rites Caesarius did, nevertheless, he similarly asserted that sinners could receive both physical and spiritual health through the saints; Paxton, *Christianizing Death*, 55. For example, about dust from Saint Martin's tomb he proclaimed: "Not only does it strengthen disabled limbs, but – something that is more important… – it removes and lightens those very blemishes of conscience"; *VSM* 3.60; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 284. Like Caesarius, Gregory disparaged the ministrations of traditional healers as demonic, and he even implied it was possible to lose one's soul by riskily relying on soothsayers. For example, in a diptych pertaining to events at Brioude during the plague of 571 Gregory contrasted the outcomes of two of his own servants who fell victim to the pestilence. In the first instance, when a boy became ill Gregory's attendants called on a soothsayer. It was explained that the healer chanted, draped talismans over the victim's neck, and confidently announced the youth would survive. Then Gregory arrived on the scene. Recalling Elijah's prophecy, he declared: "Because you have forsaken the Lord God of Israel and you have consulted the god of Ekron, therefore you will not rise from the bed into which you have ascended, but will die the death"; *VSJ* 46a; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 192, slightly modified, citing 2 Kings 1:16. Indeed, the boy's fever intensified and he "exhaled his spirit" (*spiritum exalavit*). In the second case, another servant contracted the plague days later, but this time Gregory was on hand. He wisely sent others to fetch dust from Saint Julian's tomb, which when administered as a potion reduced the boy's fever, and so he lived. Gregory attached a rare commentary to the end of this anecdote; specifically, he admonished readers to abide by the examples provided and not hesitate to seek support from the martyrs and confessors. But what about the dead servant? Gregory did not characterize the deceased youth's death as the result of an *iudicium Dei*, nor did he remark that the boy *interiit*. The term he used to recount the servant's demise, *spiritum exalavit*, relates nothing more than a this-worldly death. In his usual manner the writer expected readers to

Conclusion

Gregory's habit for identifying certain saved and damned souls originated firstly out of the cleric's practical pastoral agenda to exhort the holy *virtutes* delivered by heaven-dwelling saints for the benefit of earthly inhabitants. He deemed it imperative for people to glorify and invoke the saints to attain physical and mental health and more importantly to merit spiritual cleansing. A second foundation for his practice of studying the circumstances of deaths and discerning fates was his associations with people who shared his visionary and discriminating proclivities. Acquaintances such as Avitus of Clermont, Aredius of Limoges, Salvius of Albi, and Sunniulf of Randau picked up where Gregory's relatives left off by showing how he could elevate his efforts to comprehend unseen truths to the point of glimpsing the very loci of eschatological reality.[176] Gregory became convinced he could analyze actual this-worldly deaths and interpret them in the context of people's actions in order to identify the afterlife condition for the souls of society's *valde boni* and *valde mali*. He developed a vocabulary to communicate insights about the locations of deceased souls from the literary sources he consumed, including hagiography, history, and chronicles. The confluence of the bishop's pastoral intention to illustrate the eschatological dimension of saints' *virtutes* paired with his desire to express the otherworldly truths evident from his visionary insights, along with his preferred literary technique of moralizing through memorials of individuals, resulted in a novel end product. As a complement to the already well-established hagiographical practice of narrating how specific righteous souls were in heaven, he tossed aside the longtime late ancient Christian reticence that had prevented writers from stigmatizing individuals through indicating their souls' infernal condition. More than seven-hundred years before Dante's famous unabashed effort, Gregory let loose the practice of singling out individual hellmates in Latin writings. A

ponder whether the boy's expiration shortly after committing such a sinful act would bode ill for his soul. Gregory did provide a clue towards helping his audience reach a proper conclusion. He shared how the youth died according to a typological scenario, following in the footsteps of the unfaithful Israelite king Ahaziah, who once forsook God by opting to place his trust in the prophetic abilities of Baalzebub; 2 Kings 1: 1-18. The biblical citation was enough for Gregory to intimate the boy's fate. Like Caesarius, Gregory believed that all who died while obstinately wedded to reliance upon profane powers deservedly incurred damnation.

176 Gregory's longtime friend Aredius died in 591. Miracles at his funeral proved angels lifted his soul to heaven (*susceptus ab angelis*); *Historiae* 10.29. One divinatory practice Aredius was credited with was water dowsing; Van Dam, *Martyrs*, 58 n. 43, and see de Nie, *Views*, 83-86. Aredius's mother, Pelagia, also was a saint whose tomb was a source for healings; *GC* 102. For Pelagia as another of Gregory's ideal widows; Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 22-23.

conservative estimation of the number of people our author stigmatized individually through recording the loss of their souls is more than 150.[177] His

177 The pool of people whom Gregory identified as losing their soul, perishing, and succumbing to divine anger, divine wrath, divine judgment and holy vengeance cuts across the entire of society, from emperors and kings, to dukes and counts, to bishops and deacons, to door-keepers and servants. This wide array of damned souls reflects the breadth of the audience which the author was attempting to captivate, and steer onto a penitent path before it was too late. Gregory's methods for stigmatizing through conveying damnation varied from explicit announcements to more implicit mentions of signs. The writer assigned far more people *ad infernum* than the approximately 150 individuals alluded to above, if one takes groups into account. For example, he reported the *interitus* of more than 5000 soldiers in 585. These men had participated in atrocities while *en route* to besiege Carcassonne and they died by God's judgment (*iudicio Dei*); *Historiae* 8.30; *GM* 104. The following list concentrates on the damned whom Gregory stigmatized individually, or close to it. Where names are unavailable a citation is given. After each individual follows the terminology Gregory used to communicate condemnation. Otherwise, a sign or the name of an avenging saint is given. The list provides a sense of just how frequently Gregory helped guide readers to his own conclusions about peoples' fates by providing terms commonly reserved for "villains" to communicate the loss of a person's soul. Gregory used such terminology in reference to the deaths of all but two archetypal villains whose terrible deaths he narrated. These are: Arius (*infernalibus igneus, interitus*); Chus/Zoroaster (lightning); Herod (*De interitu, iudicio divino*); Nero (suicide); Phineas (*interisse*); Pilate (*De interitu*); anonymous Israelite kings (*interitus*, ignored prophets).

Among Gregory's hellmates, there are twenty-six emperors and kings (not including heirs of Clovis), and two pretenders, both of whom may have been Merovingians. Most of the individuals from this category were heretics: Alaric II, Visigoth king (*vitam multatur aeternam*); Amalaric, Visigoth king (*De interitu*); Athanaric, Visigoth king (*iudicio Dei*, lost kingdom, but death not reported); Chloderic, Frank king (*De interitu, interiit, iudicio Dei*, Proverbs 26, 27); Chlodomer, Frank king (*De interitu*); Chararic, Frank king (*De interitu*); Chararic's anonymous son, Frank king (*De interitu*); Chroc, Alaman king (*interiit*); Euric, Visigoth king (*interiit; ultio divina*); Gelimer, Vandal king (lost life and governance); Godigisel, Burgundian king (*De interitu; interitus; animas perdiderunt*); Godomar, Burgundian king (*interitus; animas perdiderunt*); Gundobad, Burgundian king (*interitus, animas perdiderunt, exitum*); Gundovald, Frank pretender (*De interitu; interiit*); Hermanafrid, Thuringian king (*De interitu*); Hermenegild, Visigoth prince (*iudicium divinum*); Huneric, Vandal king (*indignam vitam, iusta morte*); Justin II, emperor (insanity); Magnus Maximus, emperor (*De interitu; Regis aeterni iudicio*); Munderic, Frank pretender (*De interitu*); Ragnachar, Frank king (*De interitu*); Ricchar, Ragnachar's brother, Frank king (*De interitu*); Rignomer, Ragnachar's brother, Frank king (*De interitu*); Sigibert the Lame, Frank king (*De interitu*); Theodoric, Ostrogoth king (*gehennae; interiit*); Theudegisel, Visigoth king (*interiit*); Thorismund, Visigoth king (*interiit*); Valens, emperor (*De interitu*). Gregory reckoned that as many as eighteen Merovingians from Clovis's line lost their souls, for whom, see below, Chapter 5.

One of the largest categories of people for whom Gregory assigned perdition were those in royal service. Here are forty individuals from the ranks of secular office-holders and royal courtiers and agents followed by a handful of soldiers: Andarchius, courtier under Sigibert (*De interitu; interitu*); Aregisel, Theuderic's duke (perjury at altar); Berthefried, Childebert II's duke (*De interitu; interibis*, says Brunhild); Britto, count Waroch's retainer (St Nazarius); Charegisel, Sigibert's chamberlain (*exitus vitae*); ? Chariulf, Gundovald's retainer (*interitu*, last reported in sanctuary); Childeric, Sigibert's retainer (*detrimentum animae*); Chundo, Guntram's chamberlain

(*De interitu*); Claudius, Guntram's retainer, agent of Fredegund (*Dei ultio*); Dacco, Chilperic's duke (*De interitu*); Desiderius, duke under Chilperic, then Guntram (*De interitu*); Dracolen, Chilperic's duke (*De interitu*); Eberulf, Chilperic's chamberlain (*De interitu*); Godin, courtier under Sigibert, then Chilperic (*interiit*); Gomacharius, count (*ultionis divinae, ulciscatur deus*); Guntram Boso, Childebert II's duke (*De interitu; iudicium Dei*); Leo of Poitiers, Chramn's retainer (insanity); Leudast, count under Charibert and Chilperic (*De interitu, interisset, indignam vitam, iusta morte*; Proverbs 26: 27); Macliaw, Breton count (*De interitu; interitus*); Mark, Chilperic's referendary (*animae detrimentum*); Mummolus the patrician (*De interitu*); Mummolus, prefect under Chilperic (*De interitu*); Nanthinus, count (*interiit*); Nonnichius, count under Chilperic (*interiit*); Palladius, count under Sigibert (*De interitu*); Parthenius, Theudebert's tax collector (*De interitu; interiit; exitu*); Pelagius, keeper of royal horses at Tours (third day, St Mary); Plato, Chlothar's retainer (*infernum*, third day); Rauching, Childebert II's duke (*De interitu, interitus, interitu, interiit*, Proverbs 26: 27); Roccolen, Chilperic's duke (*interiit* [x 2]); Secundinus, Theudebert's retainer (suicide); Sigivald, Theuderic's duke (*De interitu, exitu*); Terentiolus, count under Guntram (*interitus* with soldiers? *iudicio Dei* with soldiers? *GM* 104); Ursio, Childebert II's duke (*De interitu; interibis*, says Brunhild); Victorius, Euric's duke (stoning); Waddo, retainer of Princess Rigunth (*De interitu; interitu*); Anon tax collector (*VSJ* 17, *iudicium* [x 2], *haud dubitum est qualem illuc teneat locum*); Anon guardian of royal horse (*GM* 24, suicide); Anon retainer of Sigibert (*GM* 71, *iudicium dei*); Anon servant of Sigibert's retainer (*GM* 71, St Dionysius); Anon soldier (*VSM* 1.2, *dei iudicio*; suicide); Anon soldier (*VSM* 1.2, *interiit*); Anon soldier of Sigibert's army (*GM* 71, *iudicio dei*); Anon Visigoth soldier (*GC* 12, St Martin); ? Anon soldier (*MA* 17, *interisse*, says St Andrew); Anon war leaders from Auvergne under Alaric II (*Historiae* 2.37, *interirent*); Four anon retainers of Chramn (*GM* 65, *ultione divina*); Nineteen anon soldiers (*Historiae* 4.48, St Martin).

Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 139, n. 97, remarks that the writer did not stress Bishop Cautinus's *interitus* out of respect for his episcopal office. While that may be true, Gregory did make a clear contrast between the dutiful actions of Cato during the plague of 571, which may have saved his soul, and those of the cowardly, self-absorbed bishop prior to his demise; *Historiae* 4.31. Furthermore, nineteen chapters earlier, the author provided two hints anticipating Cautinus's death, and suggestive of his eventual fate. First Gregory tarnished Cautinus by slyly slipping in a quotation by the bishop's saintly predecessor, Sidonius Apollinaris, that ironically included the telltale word *interitum*; Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae* 2.1. Then, just as he would do later in the *Historiae* with King Chilperic, he associated the prelate's criminality with that committed by the archetypal villains, Nero and Herod; *Historiae* 4.12. Cautinus is one of eight Catholic bishops, who themselves number among a total of twenty-nine individual clerics and ascetics, whom Gregory intimated as meriting hellfire: Arbogast, priest at Trier (perjury, St Maximinus); Athloc, Arian bishop (*nequam spiritum*); ? Badegisil, bishop of Le Mans (cruel and unjust); ? Bertram, bishop of Bordeaux (St Sergius); Boantus, church door-keeper (*De interitu, interiit*); Cautinus, bishop of Clermont (*interitum*, says Sidonius Apollinaris; like Nero and Herod); Dagulf, abbot (*De interitu*); Frontinus, bishop of Angoulême (*interiit; iudicio dei*); Justinian, bishop-elect at Tours (*iudicio Dei*); Leo, priest (third day, St Martin); Martin, priest (St Nicetius of Lyons); Pappolus, bishop of Langres (*exitum*, St Tetricus); Priscus, bishop of Lyons (struck permanently senseless with entire household, St Nicetius of Lyons); Proclus, priest (*reddiditque illi Dominus*, St Quintianus); Sagittarius, bishop of Gap (*De interitu, donec ira Dei diruit super eos*); Salonius, bishop of Embrun (*donec ira Dei diruit super eos*, but his death is not recounted); ? Sylvester, bishop-elect (died on third day of epileptic seizure); Theudulf, deacon (*De interitu*); Winnoch, priest (insanity); Two anon priests (*Historiae* 2.23, *ultione divina; iudicium; possessurus infernum; partier possidere tartarum*); ? Anon priest (*Historiae* 6.36; *interitu*); Anon priest (*VSM* 2.53, insanity); Anon heretic priest (*GM* 79, *nequam spiritum*); Anon archdeacon (*GM* 13, insanity, third day, St John); Anon deacon (*Historiae* 4.36; St Nicetius of Lyons); Anon church custodian

primary motive for doing this was not to generate an entertaining piece of literature but rather to discourage others in his milieu from becoming the next Leudast or Guntram Boso.

Some may find Gregory's method of reading deathly signs to identify the otherworldly location of souls insufficient. What of the massive crowd of middling sinners who correspond with Augustine's *non valde boni* and *non valde mali*? Gregory's contemporary Pope Gregory I in the *Dialogi* had begun pondering the otherworldly condition of souls belonging to such complicated sinners. He speculated how their souls might experience a *post mortem* burning off of sins which lingered beyond death.[178] Purgatory was being born in late antiquity, but as Isabel Moreira has detailed, Gregory of Tours was not willing to accept that purgative phenomena would continue

(*VSM* 1.31, perjury, *in tartarum; ad ima; ultio divina*); Anon (clerical?) servant of Gregory (*VSJ* 46a, *morte morieris*, 2 Kings 1, 16); Anon female ascetic (GM 105, *migrans inferno*) In addition: thirty anon monks (*Historiae* 4.31, greed, buried alive).

Rounding out the list is a mixed bag of approximately forty-four individuals representing different social levels and occupations, from aristocrats, citizens, merchants, and artisans to a faith healer. This group includes criminals of various stripes including adulterers, thieves, murderers, and perjurers: Burgolen, son of Guntram Boso's father-in-law (*interiunt*); Childeric the Saxon (*De interitu; ultus est Deus*); Christopher, merchant (*De interitu*); Dolo, son of Guntram Boso's father-in-law (*interiit; interiunt*); Domnola, aristocrat (*De interitu*); ? Faretrus of Tours (*VP* 16.3, St Venantius); ? Lupus of Tours (murdered); Magnovald, Austrasian nobleman (*De interitu*); Maurus of Troyes (third day, St Lupus); Pastor of the Auvergne (*VSJ* 15, *interisse*, lightning); ? Phatyr, convert from Judaism (killed in feud); ? Priscus, Jewish merchant (murdered); Severus, Guntram Boso's father-in-law (*morte pessima*); Sichar of Tours (*De interitu*); Syrivald of Dijon (*De interitu*); Vedast of Tours (*De interitu; divina ultrix; iniquam animam*); Anon, Deuteria's daughter (*Historiae* 3.26, *De interitu*); Anon son of Queen Marcatrudis, but not by Guntram (*Historiae* 4.25, *iudicio Dei*); Anon, killed in feud (*Historiae* 5.5, *exitum*); Anon murderer of Gregory's brother (*Historiae* 5.5, *iudicio dei; exitum*); Anon Neustrian noblewoman (*Historiae* 5.32, suicide); ? Anon adulterer (*Historiae* 6.36, fiery death); Anon two thieves (*Historiae* 7.21, St Martin); Anon son and servants of Duke Rathar (*Historiae* 8.12, *ultio divina*); Anon arsonist/perjurer (*Historiae* 8.16, St Martin); ? Anon relatives of Chramnesind (*Historiae* 9.19, *interitum*, says Chramnesind); ? Anon son of Audinus of Tours (*Historiae* 9.30, third day, St Martin?); Anon thug at Poitiers (*Historiae* 10.15, *divina providentia cooperante*); Anon assassins (*Historiae* 10.18, suicide and death by torture); Anon two sons of Waddo (Historiae 10.21, *De interitu*, only one depicted dying); Anon Pseudo-Christ (*Historiae* 10.25, *De interitu*); Anon thief (*VSM* 1.17, *divinae ultionis*); Anon son of Eustochius (*VSM* 1.30, St Martin); Anon servants of Hortensius of Clermont (*VP* 4.3, *interieret*, third day, St Quintianus); ? Anon murderer (*VP* 8.7, *exitu*); Anon brother of Dado (*VP* 8.11, St Nicetius of Lyons); Anon Jewish glassworker (*GM* 9, *dominico ... inimicus*, fiery death); Anon perjurers (*GM* 19, *divino iudicio*); Anon Jewish thief (*GM* 21, *iniquus*, stoned to death); Anon Armenian apostate (*GM* 95, *perpetui ignis*); Anon agent of emperor Leo (*GC* 62, *in tartarum, dei iudicium*); Anon goldsmith (*GC* 62, *in tartarum, dei iudicium*); Anon slave-master and wife (*GC* 67, St Lupus); Anon citizen of Reims (*GC* 78, St Remigius); ? Anon merchant (not shown dying, but *genennae; iudicium dei; iudicio dei; in tartarum*).

178 Brown, "*Gloriosus Obitus,*" 296-99, 312-13.

beyond this life.[179] For him whatever fire was applied to a soul or body in an afterlife setting was only of a punishing variety. This is not to say Gregory was not cognizant of middling sinners. For example, what of Parthenius's wife and friend who haunted their murderer through a nightmare? From whence did the writer imagine the pair projecting their souls to inform the wicked tax-collector about his upcoming judgment? Was it from heaven, or perhaps Abraham's Bosom? Apparently, it was not Gregory's concern to elaborate on the circumstances of souls such as theirs.[180] His objective was

179 Moriera, *Heaven's Purge*, 63-80. For development of purgatorial thought among sixth-century figures including Pomerius, Caesarius, and Pope Gregory I: ibid., 81-94. See also Bernstein, *Hell and Its Rivals*, 168-98.

180 See *GC* 64 about a deceased couple of senatorial status who died childless and bequeathed their wealth to the cathedral at Lyons. The husband died first and was buried in Saint Mary's basilica, after which the woman regularly supplied the church with quality Gaza wine for mass. She believed that "the dead man would get a taste of rest" (*defunctus requiem … delibasset*) each day that she provided the offering of wine on her mate's behalf. Van Dam, *Confessors*, 70, translated *requiem* as "repose [in Paradise]," his words in brackets. This makes some sense given that the anecdote otherwise has no saint in it. But why would an inhabitant of heaven receive temporary requiem? Perhaps Gregory instead imagined the man's soul resided in Abraham's Bosom where he received the periodic tastes. The writer certainly was familiar with Prudentius's reference to souls in hell receiving momentary refreshment every Easter Sunday; Prudentius, *Cathemerinon* 5.133-35; Brown, *Ransom of the Soul*, 113. Gregory went on to explain how an evil sub-deacon started switching out the good wine the pious woman was bringing for mass with the cheap stuff. But the dead man tasted the vinegar offering, and forthwith he ventured through a dream to alert his widow of the misdeed, which she promptly fixed. Our author ended the anecdote by sharing how he thought that the merit of the woman's good work (*operis boni meritum*) contributed to the miracle's occurrence. Perhaps he similarly reasoned, leaving it unwritten, that the husband and wife both attained salvation but only after the latter's death, and by virtue of fulfillment of their last *bonum opus*, bequeathal of all their goods to the cathedral.

Another anecdote that alludes to a deceased person requiring *requiem* is *GM* 74, about the Burgundian king, Saint Sigismund. Gregory briskly detailed how Sigismund had killed his son at his second wife's urging and thereafter sought to be absolved of his crime through penance and prayer conducted at the monastery of Saint-Maurice d'Agaune. In addition to him heaping endowments on the monastery, the king was credited with inaugurating "daily psalms" (*psallentium cotidianum*) at that time. This appears to be a reference to the *laus perennis*, perpetual chant, which Sigismund had already instituted at the monastery in 515, a year before he became king; Folz, "Zur Frage," 322. Later the king and his family were captured by the Frankish king Chlodomer, and killed; *Historiae* 3.6, and see below, pp. 230-32. Afterwards Sigismund's corpse was retrieved and buried at Saint-Maurice, where miracles at the tomb proved the king's reception "among the saints" (*in consortio sanctorum*). Gregory finished: "For whenever people suffering from chills piously celebrate a mass in his honor and make an offering to God for the king's repose (*pro requie*), immediately their tremors cease, their fevers disappear, and they are restored to their earlier health"; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 97. Drawing on passages from Sigismund's mass preserved in the Bobbio Missal and a tenth-century Secret in the St Gall mass, Frederick Paxton has elaborated how Gregory knew of the *missa Sancti Sigismundi*; Paxton, "Liturgy and Healing," 26-32. Paxton singled out one prayer belonging to the original *missa* through

to concentrate on what he believed would prove more beneficial to readers of the *Miracula* and *Historiae*, to glorify the patently saved and stigmatize the obviously damned. Hence he indicated Parthenius's fate, but not his victims'. In a society where many people, both elites and commoners, were being enticed to rush off on this or that campaign in hopes of acquiring worldly lucre, without giving sufficient thought to the possibility they might die and lose the opportunity to repent their sins, Gregory apparently thought it best to focus on those whom Augustine termed the *valde mali*. Some details regarding his thoughts about afterlife, therefore, must remain beyond retrieval.

However, let us recall that Gregory announced Parthenius's *interitus* in a diptych which contrastingly mentioned King Theudebert's *obitus*. While we have indicated that by deploying the term *obitus* the writer opted not to remark on Theudebert's hereafter condition in the *capitulum*, this does mean he kept silent about the ruler's fate in the chapter's narrative. One category of people whose ranks were not composed exclusively of obviously righteous or obviously villainous personalities was Frankish royalty. An analysis of the author's writings about the actions, characters, and deaths of kings, queens, and their progeny sheds further light on the bishop's pastoral agenda, and the literary techniques he used to moralize through memorials of dead individuals. The next chapter will address Gregory's thoughts about the fates of the Merovingians.

which one was to request that the Lord accept offerings on the king's behalf so that Sigismund in the future would be able to associate with *sanctorum tuorum consortio*; ibid., 31. Therefore, according to the *missa* Gregory was familiar with, Sigismund held an ambiguous place in that he was a potential source for healing people's fevers while at the same moment he needed to be prayed for in hopes he would become a saint; ibid. Gregory's reference to making offerings for Sigismund's *requiem* reflects the influence of this prayer. The bishop's adjustment to the scenario, Paxton noted, was to declare that miracles at the king's tomb proved Sigismund had been admitted to the *consortium sanctorum*; ibid., 32. But did Gregory believe it was the people's supplications which eventually won Sigismund salvation, as the *missa* proposed, or did he think that Sigismund became a martyr immediately upon his death? Paxton favors the former; ibid. It seems more likely to me that Gregory would not have believed the king needed those prayers, because he had been saved since the moment of his martyrdom. Gregory reproduced a sliver of the *missa*'s prayer, but only to reflect what that text directed the faithful to do. On Sigismund's martyrdom, see below, pp. 232-33.

5. Fathoming the Fates of the Merovingians

The writings of Gregory of Tours along with those of Venantius Fortunatus suggest that by the late sixth century a general situation of mutual cooperation between bishops and kings prevailed in Gaul.[1] By then several generations of Frankish kings had become accustomed to filling prominent roles in ecclesiastical matters including convening and presiding over church councils and appointing bishops to their sees.[2] Gregory's own relaxed acceptance of episcopal and royal cooperation was due in part to his family members long benefiting from the support of kings.[3] Sacred literature contributed to his sensibility that kings and bishops should strive to coexist. In Scripture the writer could find as much divine justification for royal authority as for clerical if he desired. But Scripture also taught him that the best kings were those who minded their spiritual betters and advisers. As Martin Heinzelmann has addressed, Gregory gauged relationships of contemporary bishops and monarchs according to past interactions between Old Testament prophets and Israelite rulers.[4] The bishop may have gathered from the Old Testament that for every Hezekiah, there was an Ahaz, a Manasseh, and an Amon.

As he did for numerous righteous and villainous characters throughout his corpus, Gregory scrutinized the actions of Frankish royal family members and estimated the eternal condition of their souls. He recorded their pious and shameful activities, frequently both, and detailed their demises. For some he provided concise character evaluations. Gregory ushered readers

1 On a "governmental mood" in Gaul: Brown, *Ransom of the Soul*, 144-47, 150.

2 On Merovingian kings and church councils: Halfond, *Archeology*; idem, "Negotiating Episcopal Support"; idem, "All the King's Men"; Pontal, *Histoire des conciles*. On kings and episcopal elections: Claude, "Bestellung der Bischöfe"; Wood, "Ecclesiastical Politics"; Norton, *Episcopal Elections*, 115-17.

3 For example, King Theuderic approved Gregory's uncle Gallus for the episcopal seat at Clermont, Childebert I supported Nicetius becoming bishop of Lyons, and of course, Sigibert and Brunhild appointed Gregory as bishop of Tours. Ralph Mathisen, "Family of Georgius Florentius Gregorius," 90, asserted that the successes of Gregory's family resulted in part from them nurturing good relations with the Frankish kings.

4 Heinzelmann, "Histoire, rois et prophètes"; idem, "Heresy in Books." See also, Van Dam, "Merovingian Gaul," 215. On Old Testament models for Gregory's bishops: Craig, "Bishops and Balancing." Also on bishops and kings: Breukelaar, *Historiography*, 227-57; Weidemann, *Kulturgeschichte*, 1: 132-4.

through a cognitive process akin to that which he underwent while he examined their activities in real time.[5] Sometimes he communicated a royal's hereafter explicitly and other times through insinuation. A study of Gregory's thoughts on the fates of Frankish royalty adds depth to understanding how the writer expected readers to come to the same conclusions he did about certain people's hereafter and to take away moral lessons from their analysis. Undoubtedly the bishop expected Merovingian family members to number among those who would benefit most from studying his corpus, especially the *Historiae*, and adopting its teachings.[6]

Gregory's willingness to offer written assessments on the fates of individual royals arose in a context of other litterateurs doing the same. Usually writers presented such declarations in celebratory or comforting pieces, such as consolatory poems and letters. Mention has already been made of Bishop Remigius of Reims's letter to King Clovis assuring that his newly baptized and recently deceased sister was deserving of veneration, not mourning.[7] Another Gallic author who credited several royal souls with passing to a heavenly abode was Fortunatus. For example, he affirmed Queen Theudechildis' salvation through the following verses: "Happy is she who enjoys by her virtues a day that is endless! Active in charitable deeds, then carried off to eternal light (*aeterna in luce relata*), she lived for seventy-five years gloriously in this world."[8] Another queen whose heavenly ascension Fortunatus acknowledged was Galswinth, who was murdered around 570 not long after her marriage to King Chilperic.[9] In the final

5 This literary technique lies behind much scholarly commentary about Gregory presenting individual kings' good and bad behavior; e. g., Goffart, *Narrators*, 221-27; Wood, "Secret Histories," 254-64; idem, "Individuality," 45.

6 For the *Historiae* as a kind of "mirror for princes": Murray, "Composition," 81. Compare *Epistulae Austrasicae* 10, from a Bishop Aurelian to King Theudebert I, which Roger Collins labelled "a true 'Mirror of Princes'"; Collins, "Theodebert I," 21.

7 *Epistulae Austrasicae* 1.

8 Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 4.25.20-22; ed. and trans. by Roberts, *Poems*, 258-59. Theudechildis was the only queen whom the poet commemorated in his forth book of *Carmina*, a selection of verse epitaphs. Fortunatus treated Queen Theudechildis' fate similarly to those of other elite women whom he memorialized by stressing the role almsgiving played in securing their salvation. On Fortunatus's epitaphs: Roberts, *Humblest Sparrow*, 10-37. Otherwise, compare the queen's epitaph with *Carmen* 6.3, which the poet penned while Theudechildis was still alive. In that poem Fortunatus also addressed the queen's charity and three times assured her eventual residence in heaven. He similarly forecasted salvation for the virgin, Berchildis; *Carmen* 6.4. Unlike the poet, Gregory was not impressed with Theudechildis; see below, pp. 246-47 n. 198.

9 Commemorating this queen was a tricky affair, because it was widely held that her husband, King Chilperic, ordered the murder. Not only did Gregory personally believe Chilperic instigated Galswinth's death, the historian also wrote that the king's brothers suspected as much, and

consolatory section of Galswinth's elegy, the poet referenced her heavenly fate by describing how she now serves God in the company of Saints Stephen, Peter, and Mary.[10] Fortunatus ended the poem with an explicit assurance of the queen's eternal blessedness: "Believe, Christians, that she lives, because she had belief; it is not right to mourn her, for paradise now holds her."[11] A third Merovingian queen whose soul Fortunatus situated in heaven was his longtime friend and fellow resident of Poitiers, Queen Radegund.[12] Fortunatus composed a full *Vita Radegundis* after the queen's demise in 587 as part of an early effort to establish the saint's cult.[13] About Radegund's

therefore they (momentarily) forced Chilperic out of his realm; *Historiae* 4.28. Galswinth was the older sister of Sigibert's bride, Brunhild; both siblings were Visigothic princesses. Chilperic presumably arranged to wed Galswinth shortly after Sigibert had united with his bride in order to match the political benefit his brother had achieved through association with the Visigothic Amal family. Fortunatus, of course, avoided any mention of the unsettling side to Galwinth's demise in the lengthy, 370-line poem. Instead, his verses appropriately focused on the grief of relations and closed with a *consolatio*; Roberts, "Venantius Fortunatus' Elegy." On the likelihood of Brunhild as the poem's recipient: ibid., 301. Fortunatus related the queen's expiration thusly: "For she enjoyed only briefly the ties of marriage with a spouse; at the very beginning of her life she was carried off by death. Overtaken by the swift blow of sudden misfortune she passed away (*deficit*), and her lamp was overturned, her light extinguished (*lumen obit*)"; Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 6.5.251-54; ed. and trans., Roberts, *Poems*, 392-93.

10 Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 6.5.357-60. Fortunatus testified to Galswinth deserving salvation by alluding to the fact that she converted from Arianism, and achieving it by describing how a miracle occurred at her tomb: *Carmen* 6.5.277-80, 361, 365-66.

11 Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 6.5.369-70; ed. and trans, Roberts, *Poems*, 400-01.

12 The queen was formerly a Thuringian princess, taken upon the conquest of her father's realm and forced to marry King Chlothar at a young age. Upon separating from her mate, she established a convent at Poitiers. For that institution the queen acquired several eastern relics, most famously a piece of the True Cross, which both Gregory and Fortunatus celebrated; *GM* 5; Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmina*, 2.1, 2.2, 2.6, and see Appendix, *Carmen* 2, *Ad Iustinum et Sophiam Augustos*. On Radegund's procurement of the Holy Cross in the context of diplomatic efforts between King Sigibert's court and that of Emperor Justin II: Cameron, "Early Religious Policies"; Esders, "'Avenger of all Perjury,'" 33-37; George, *Venantius Fortunatus*, 62-67. In general on Fortunatus and Radegund: ibid., 161-78.

13 In the *vita* Fortunatus followed a strict Augustinian approach to agency and grace by depicting the queen as a vessel (*vas*) through whom the indwelling Christ operated from birth to death, and to whom salvation was undeservedly extended. The early seventh-century nun Baudonivia scripted a second *Vita Radegundis* which focused on what the queen did to please God and how she persevered unto her salvation. Baudonivia's Radegund achieved glory through human agency helped by divine grace. Rebecca Weaver suggests the influence of a modified Augustinianism, which Baudonivia would have encountered through Caesarius's *Regula virginum*, adopted for the Convent of the Holy Cross, and the canons of the Council of Orange (529); Weaver, "Prosper's Theological Legacy," 389-94. An additional source where Baudonivia could have found ample models of holy people striving towards salvation and being aided by grace in the process was Gregory's corpus. Also on the *Vitae Radegundis*: Gäbe, "*Radegundis: Sancta*."

fate Fortunatus three times wrote that she *migravit de seculo*. Apparently he, like Gregory and Remigius, deemed this terminology sufficient to be read as synonymous with *migravit ad Christum*.[14] A Merovingian king for whom Fortunatus ascribed salvation was Childebert I. In a poem for the king's widow pertaining to a garden the husband had once presented to his wife, Fortunatus wrote about the deceased monarch: "From here [the garden] he [Childebert] made his way when he visited holy precincts, which now for his virtues he inhabits himself. For previously from time to time he lovingly frequented holy shrines, but now he lives forever in the halls of the blessed (*nunc tamen assidue templa beata tenet*)."[15]

One of Gregory and Fortunatus's early contemporaries, Bishop Nicetius of Trier, apparently showed so much concern for the afterlife condition of kings, God decided to bless him with divine knowledge about it. Perhaps Gregory reasoned that because Nicetius had proven himself unflinchingly just in the face of two of the most imposing Merovingians, Theudebert I and Chlothar I, God chose to provide the bishop with divine insight about Frankish royals.[16] According to our author, Nicetius one night dreamed of a tower that climbed to heaven from which angels peered out through many windows. One angel read from a tome; specifically, he "named one king after

14 Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Radegundis*, 29: *speraretur mirgare de seculo*, 38: *migravit de saeculo*; *migrasse … de saeculo*.

15 Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 6.6.19-22; ed. and trans., Roberts, *Poems*, 402-03. Gregory may not have been as certain about Childebert's fate as was his friend. See below, pp. 239-43.

16 Nicetius did not shy away from reproving two of the proudest Merovingian kings, Theudebert I and Chlothar I. Gregory claimed that the reason he passed along a story about Nicetius censuring Theudebert was to instruct the faithful and cause kings to reform their ways. According to his edifying tale, after Theudebert succeeded his father Theuderic, he behaved so unjustly that Nicetius determined to rebuke him on account of his own misdeeds and those of his subordinates. In one instance Theudebert entered the cathedral at Trier in the company of excommunicates, so the bishop refused to offer the host until the king made the wrongdoers leave. When Theudebert defied the request, a demoniac bellowed out the difference between the bishop's and the king's conduct. Gregory explained: "He said that the bishop was chaste and the king was an adulterer; that the former was humble in his fear of Christ and the latter was proud in his royal glory; that the priest would be discovered by God without blemish and the other would soon be destroyed by the author of his crimes"; *VP* 17.2; trans. by James, *Life*, 108. Theudebert was terrified by these divinely imparted truths and caused his companions to depart the church forthwith. Thereafter, he behaved more properly towards Nicetius. The latter had more success helping Theudebert see the error of his sinful ways than Chlothar. Among Nicetius's efforts to temper that king's pride, the bishop resorted to excommunicating him multiple times. Chlothar retaliated with threats to exile the prelate, and the king even followed through on his warnings at least once towards the end of his own life. King Sigibert, however, ended Nicetius's exile and restored him to the episcopal seat at Trier; *VP* 17.2-3. On the political context behind Nicetius's exile restoration: Halfond, "Negotiating Episcopal Support," 10-12.

another, not only those who were living but also those yet to be born, and he announced the nature (*qualitatem*) of the reign, and the length of their life. When he called the name of each one the other angels replied 'Amen.' And for each king it happened just as Nicetius declared in his revelation."[17] One wonders whether Gregory, when he received this tale from his friend, Nicetius's protégé, Aredius of Limoges, conferred with the latter about the correspondence between the *qualitates* of kings and their eternal fates. This was the sort of this-worldly and otherworldly connection that Gregory was keen to detect, in order to pass it along to readers for moral edification.

Merovingians in Heaven

The most obvious Merovingian whose soul Gregory acknowledged to reside in heaven was his and Fortunatus's shared friend, Radegund.[18] Like Fortunatus, Gregory was an early promoter of the queen's sanctity.[19] He provided an anecdote about her in the *GC* wherein he remarked that she was "removed from the world and placed in heaven (*collocatam in caelo*)."[20] He echoed this confident appraisal of the queen's salvation in the same anecdote by sharing it through direct discourse voiced by the lady's nuns: "Indeed we know you [Radegund] have been situated in the choirs of holy virgins and in God's paradise."[21] Among several brief mentions of Radegund's expiration, Gregory thrice used *migratio* (or *migrare*), and *transitus* once, to succinctly relate how the holy woman's soul has "passed" to heaven.[22] Another woman that married into the Merovingians whom Gregory regarded as a heaven-dwelling saint was Galswinth. In the *Historiae* the bishop narrated that after the Visigothic princess married Chilperic and converted to Catholicism, she continually complained when her husband persisted in his amorous relationship with Fredegund. Having failed to deceive his wife and convince

17 *VP* 17.5; trans. by James, *Life*, 112.

18 Radegund's establishment of a convent outside Poitiers' walls and her procurement of relics from the imperial family, including a piece of the True Cross, produced an acute tension with the city's bishop, Maroveus. The queen posed a real challenge to the prelate's spiritual authority, which he was accustomed to exercise through control of the cult of Saint Hilary. Maroveus's animosity towards Radegund lasted up to the queen's death in 587; Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 136-39; Van Dam, *Saints*, 28-41; Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 68-72.

19 On Radegund's cult: Brennan, "St Radegund."

20 *GC* 104.

21 *GC* 104: *Et scimus quidem, choris sanctarum virginum et Dei paradiso esse coniunctam…*

22 *Historiae* 9.40: *tempus migrationis*; *qua migrante*; *GC* 104: *ab hoc mundo migravit*; *de cuius transitu*.

her otherwise, Chilperic ordered a servant to strangle Galswinth to death. Gregory adapted a miracle story that Fortunatus had briefly touched on in his elegy on the queen. The historian narrated that when an oil lamp hanging in front of Galswinth's tomb fell of its own accord, it sunk halfway into the floor where it remained embedded.[23] Gregory did not include a chapter about Galswinth in one of his books of *Miracula*; nevertheless, he expected this vignette in the *Historiae* to enable readers to appreciate how the *magna virtus* God continually displayed (*ostendit*) to visitors who saw the unbroken lamp was proof enough of the queen's sanctity.[24]

A person need not have been a miracle-working saint for Gregory to imagine him or her meriting salvation. One righteous Merovingian whose soul the bishop deemed to be saved was the subject of Saint Remigius's epistle to Clovis. Because Albofled was only recently baptized when she expired, Gregory figured that her soul *migravit ad Dominum*.[25] A second Merovingian who similarly died while clad in baptismal whites was Clovis and Clotild's first child, Ingomer. Gregory stressed the proximity of this newborn's baptism to his death in the chapter's title, *De primo eius* [Clovis's] *filio baptizato et albis defuncto*.[26] The author situated the story in the context of the Catholic queen Clotild attempting to convince her still pagan husband to convert to Christianity.[27] The infant's sudden expiration potentially jeopardized the queen's providentially inspired mission. Gregory depicted the royal couple reacting opposite to one another after their loss. Whereas Clovis angrily expressed how his gods would have allowed the son to live while his wife's God had permitted him to die, Clotild responded by faithfully offering thanks to God. Gregory caused the queen to declare: "for He has deigned to welcome to His Kingdom (*regno suo dignaretur adscire*) a child conceived in my womb. I am not downcast because of what has happened, for I know

23 *Historiae* 4.28. Because Gregory situated the tale of Galswinth in a four-chapter spool about the wives and concubines of Chlothar I's successors, most of whom the bishop perceived to be lowborn and unworthy, he caused Galswinth's example to shine all the more. See Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 86-96.

24 Fortunatus had identified the lamp as glass, and he only contended that when it fell the vessel did not burst and its flame did not extinguish; Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 6.5.277-80. In contrast to this fleeting miracle, Gregory's report that the lamp lodged into the pavement enabled him to assert that it remained in that physical state, thereby providing lasting proof of Galswinth's *virtus*. For both writers intending the lamp miracle to be taken as real and as a symbol of the equally real invisible spiritual world: de Nie, *Word, Image and Experience*, IX 271.

25 *Historiae* 2.31.

26 Historiae 2.29 *capitulum*. Gregory did not intend an otherworldly connotation by use of *defunctus*.

27 *Historiae* 2.28-31.

that he who has been called from this world (*ab hoc mundo vocatus*) while in his white baptismal robes will be nurtured in God's sight."[28] Through Clotild's words Gregory shared his own general belief about salvation for the newly baptized deceased, and he also advanced his conviction in the fact that Ingomer was saved. Beyond the obvious examples of saints and the sinless, newly baptized dead, the author envisioned several other royal souls venturing to paradise upon their decease. Two Merovingians whom he figured had earned a heavenly treasure were the very couple whom he depicted playing prominent roles in Gaul's salvation history by establishing orthodox Christian rule over the already orthodox Christian region, Clovis and Clotild.[29]

King Clovis and Queen Clotild

As was proposed in Chapter 3, Gregory initially structured the *Historiae* by ending its first books with the deaths of four people significant to Gaul's salvation history and/or personally relevant to himself and his family: Saint Martin and Kings Clovis, Theudebert, and Sigibert. The writer also provided a computation of years from Creation at the conclusion of *Historiae* 4, which marked intervals of time between the demises of these individuals. He presented the first of these figures, Martin, in *Historiae* 1 as a figure representative of Gaul's Christianization. Having personally invested himself in the confessor's persona, the *alumnus Martini* purposefully ended the first book of his history with a chapter entitled *De transitu Martini episcopi*. By the word *transitus* Gregory announced how Martin's soul had "passed" to heaven. The second of the foursome in Gregory's initial computation of years was King Clovis, whose adult career the writer covered over seventeen chapters in *Historiae* 2. Therein Gregory focused on Clovis's transition from pagan to orthodox Christian, followed by the king's providential establishment of Frankish dominion over the better part of Gaul.[30] Gregory entitled the book's last chapter about the monarch's

28 *Historiae* 2.29; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 142.

29 On the considerable care Gregory took to assure the primacy of his vision of community, a vision centered on the church, not the Franks or their ruling family: Reimitz, "Providential Past," 114. Reimitz, ibid., indicates that Gregory introduced the Franks in the *Historiae* only after he "had developed the spiritual and social topography of Gaul through telling the history of the Christianization of its provinces. … But at the same time he carefully avoids giving the Franks a common history grounded in an ancient and mythical past."

30 While Gregory did not indicate that any of his own ancestors interacted with Clovis, he did highlight Burgundy, his maternal line's homeland, as the setting for one of the king's campaigns;

death *De obitu Chlodovechi regis* – no comment on the king's afterlife to be had there –, so what did the author expect readers to understand about Clovis's soul?

As scholars have now well established, Gregory's Clovis is largely legendary.[31] The bishop took advantage of a lack of memory occasioned by the passage of time, and perhaps also insufficient documentation, to refashion the historical Clovis to his own liking as a king who consistently benefited from divine support. Gregory's Clovis appears as a capable successor to King Childeric who carried on in his father's warlike footsteps.[32] Among his first accomplishments as sole ruler, Clovis defeated a territorial competitor in northern Gaul, Syagrius of Soissons, and procured his realm.[33] Gregory attributed Clovis's allowance for churches to be looted during this campaign to the fact that he was "still enveloped by the fanatical errors [of paganism] (*adhuc fanaticis erroribus involutus*)."[34] But even then, the writer would have readers imagine that the pagan ruler showed promise, such as when he showed respect to the bishop of Soissons by agreeing to restore a large vase which the Franks had taken as booty. This tale famously recounts how a soldier agitated by the king's request arrogantly struck the vase with an axe, after which Clovis sorrowfully handed over the dented vessel to the prelate. A full year later the king avenged the insult by taking an axe to the culprit's skull. The writer next glossed over how Clovis conquered Thuringia, and then he depicted how the king negotiated with a Burgundian ruler, from whom the Frank secured the Catholic princess Clotild as his bride.[35] It was at this point that Gregory depicted how the orthodox Clotild boldly

Historiae 2.32-33. The Bible and Orosius likely were the principal models for Gregory's providential view of history. For Orosius's emphasis on the continual role of providence: Werner, "Gott, Herrscher und Historiograph."

31 E. g., Daly, "Clovis: How Barbaric," who contrasts Gregory's hero with images from sources contemporaneous, or nearly so, with the early sixth-century king. For Gregory's reliance on unreliable oral history: Wood, "Gregory of Tours and Clovis," 252-55.

32 Clovis's birth: *Historiae* 2.12. Clovis's succession to Childeric: *Historiae* 2.27.

33 Scholars traditionally have followed Gregory and posited that Clovis rose to prominence near the mouth of the Rhine and extended his realm southwards, taking the Paris basin with the defeat of Syagrius; e. g., James, *The Franks*, 72-91; Heather, *Restoration of Rome*, 209-12. Alternatively, Guy Halsall proposes that Clovis's inheritance provided him with territory in the Paris basin from the outset of his reign, meaning he extended his kingdom in multiple directions including northwards; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 269-70, 303-08.

34 *Historiae* 2.27.

35 Thuringia: *Historiae* 2.27. Clotild: *Historiae* 2.28. Thuringia was the homeland of Clovis's mother, Basina: *Historiae* 2.12.

admonished the terrible pagan king to worship Christ and then faithfully defended her God against her husband's angry denouncements after their first son died.[36]

Gregory may have loosely modeled Clovis's religious turning point on the famous story of Constantine's conversion at the Milvian Bridge as rendered by Eusebius.[37] According to our author, Clovis and his soldiers fought a major battle against the Alamans and were enduring massive slaughter, at which point the king appealed to his gods' support. When the latter gave no assistance Clovis invoked the Christian God, offering to believe in Him and undergo baptism in exchange for victory. Immediately the tide of battle turned and the Alaman king was slain. In the conflict's aftermath the Alaman people begged for an end to the carnage, and so Clovis forbade further warfare and restored the peace.[38] After the victory Bishop Remigius approached the king to request he fulfill his promise. Clovis followed the holy man's advice, even while he expected his troops to refuse conversion. To the king's surprise, the soldiers, motivated by God, demanded to convert.[39] Remigius baptized Clovis along with more than 3000 soldiers. So momentous was this shining moment which Gaul played in salvation history to the writer, he recorded that God imbued the attendees' hearts with divine grace causing all to envisage they had been lifted to heaven.[40]

By positioning Clovis's baptism midway into the ruler's supposed thirty-year reign, Gregory enabled readers to interpret the king's remaining military engagements as pitting Clovis, sole champion of orthodox

36 *Historiae* 2.29. Clotild also saw that the couple's second child, Chlodomer, was baptized. When he became ill, the queen offered a prayer to Christ and the infant survived. Clovis already had a son named Theuderic from a concubine; *Historiae* 2.28. Clotild gave birth to two more sons who survived to adulthood, Childebert I and Chlothar I, and at least one daughter, Clotild.

37 *Historiae* 2.30. Milvian Bridge: Eusebius of Caesarea, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 9.9. Gregory did not explicitly mention either Constantine or the battle of Milvian Bridge in the chapter. On the possibility Gregory was wary of Constantine because he knew from Jerome's chronicle that the emperor had been baptized by an Arian: Wood, "Gregory of Tours and Clovis," 251.

38 Even while still a pagan Gregory's Clovis was able to set an example that his fully Christian royal successors seldom lived up to. Gregory preferred for the latter to battle foreign *gentes* and procure peace rather than wage civil warfare versus one another; *Historiae* 5 prologue.

39 For a comparison of Clovis's action with the Burgundian king Gundobad's unwillingness to ask his people to convert for fear of rebellion: Rousseau, "Gregory's Kings," 216-17.

40 *Historiae* 2.31. Helmut Reimitz indicates how the scene of Clovis's baptism does not represent fulfillment of Gregory's *Historiae* in the way Constantine's did for Eusebius. Rather it exemplifies the beginning of the struggle against sin that every person wages. "[Gregory's] decisive vision of community was not a one-off decision. It was a continual striving towards the morals and values of his Christendom"; Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity*, 47.

Christianity, versus his enemies, who were almost exclusively either heretics or pagans.[41] First, Clovis, through invitation, joined in on a civil war between the Arian Burgundian rulers Godigisel and Gundobad, during which the latter duplicitously gained the upper hand over his brother.[42] But the most significant of the Frank's wars was the contest versus the Visigoths, which Gregory portrayed Clovis deciding to wage because he could no longer tolerate Arians possessing lands in Gaul.[43] According to the author, Clovis announced to his magnates he would invade the Visigoths "with God's help" (*cum Dei adiutorium*).[44] Gregory's imagery for Clovis's campaign versus Alaric II is a hagiographically and biblically inspired tour de force.[45] As the Franks advanced towards the climactic confrontation, Clovis did his part to merit divine aid by demanding that his soldiers not offend God's saints. Multiple signs and portents confirmed that the

41 Analysis of the writings of Clovis's contemporary, Avitus of Vienne, indicates the king's baptism actually happened late in his reign; Wood, "Gregory of Tours and Clovis," 262-72; Shanzer, "Dating the Baptism of Clovis." On Clovis as orthodox champion: Wynn, "Wars and Warriors," 21-8. As will be addressed, the only exception to Clovis's foes being heretics or presumed pagans are two Frank kings forced to enter the church who quit their ecclesiastical positions.

42 One pitched battle Gregory mentioned during this Burgundian campaign happened on a field near Dijon. Here the author gave a nod to his great-grandfather Gregory of Langres' beloved *castrum* and district. According to this tale, during the war Clovis ended up besieging King Gundobad at Avignon, but the Frank followed the advice of a certain Aridius and lifted the siege in return for payments of tribute; *Historiae* 2.32. Gregory depicted Gundobad's adviser Aridius basically duping Clovis by seemingly switching sides to gain the latter's trust, advising Clovis to end the siege, and thereby saving the Burgundian. Soon after surviving the siege, a reinvigorated Gundobad reneged on the promised tribute and bested his brother Godegisil at Vienne, thereby achieving sole rule over the entire of Burgundy; *Historiae* 2.33. Details from Avitus of Vienne, *Epistula* 50, addressed to an Arigius, appear to support Gregory's tale about Aridius and Clovis; Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, 326-30. For the idea that Aridius's advice to Clovis followed ancient teachings on military science; Bachrach: "Gregory of Tours," 353-4.

43 Gregory claimed that following the Burgundian war Alaric II, king of the Visigoths, proposed to secure an alliance with Clovis after witnessing how the latter had been incessantly subduing peoples; *Historiae* 2.35. Despite these overtures, many Gallic people, according to our author, preferred to be ruled by the Franks; *Historiae* 2.35. One such person who favored siding with Clovis was Bishop Quintianus of Rodez, who was suspected by both the locals and Visigoths in his town of favoring the Franks. Quintianus eluded assassination by fleeing to Clermont; *Historiae* 2.36. Later Quintianus became bishop of that town where, eventually, he recruited the would-be monk, Gregory's uncle Gallus, into the city's clergy; *VP* 4.1, 6.2. Gregory conveniently caused the southern Gauls' preference to be ruled by the orthodox king to correspond with Clovis's statement that he could not abide the heretics holding lands in Gaul; *Historiae* 2.37.

44 *Historiae* 2.37.

45 Gregory's narrative resembles Fortunatus's account of the war at *De virtutibus S. Hilarii* 7. Both writers portray the conflict as an anti-heretical campaign; Shanzer, "Vouillé 507," 64-68.

Franks maintained divine favor.[46] The two forces clashed outside Poitiers at Vouillé.[47] With God and His saints aligned on the side of the orthodox army, the Visigoth soldiers quickly fled from the battle, thereby giving victory to the Franks. Gregory claimed that the Frank king personally slew Alaric II and eluded his own death in the process. After the battle Clovis and his eldest son Theuderic accumulated many southern Gallic cities, including Clermont.[48] Upon his return north the triumphant king honored Saint Martin's church with gifts, and while at Tours he was presented with the honorary consulate and the patriciate, granted by Byzantine emperor Anastasius, who also recognized the victor's royal rank.[49] From Tours Clovis marched to Paris, which he made his capital city.[50] Therefore, *cum Dei adiutorium* Clovis established an orthodox Christian kingdom that encompassed most of Gaul's orthodox Christian populace. At this point in his narrative for *Historiae* 2 all that was left for Gregory to do was to tend to the mighty king's salvation.

Gregory set the scene for Clovis's death and salvation by making of the book's final four chapters an extended diptych; three tales on the sordid demises of several among Clovis's royal relations would provide a contrast with the Catholic ruler's own expiration and fate. Gregory depicted the

46 During the Frankish army's march towards Poitiers, Clovis cut down one of his own soldiers who ignored the ruler's demand that his troops take nothing besides food and water while in the Touraine, lest they offend Saint Martin. The image of Clovis insisting his soldiers not transgress against God's saints is central to how Gregory thought a king needed to act to assure victory in battle. If a ruler caused his troops to respect God's bishops, churches, and saints, the deity in turn would favor him with success in battle. For a more thorough example of this sentiment: *Historiae* 8.30. Following the fatal reprimand of the unworthy soldier, there would be no further mention of atrocities committed during Clovis's wars. Gregory further narrated that on the outskirts of Tours, Clovis prayed to God for a sign and sent envoys to visit Martin's basilica. They returned with promising news that the church's clergy had just begun singing Psalm 18 as they entered, signaling that the Franks would demolish their enemy. Another of the king's prayers resulted in the appearance of a deer, which directed the Frankish soldiers to a point where they could cross over a flooded river. Finally, at Poitiers a pillar of light (*pharus*) was seen rising over Saint Hilary's basilica. About that phenomenon Gregory explained: "It seemed to move towards Clovis as a sign that with the support of the blessed Saint he might the more easily overcome the heretic host, against which Hilary himself had so often done battle for the faith"; *Historiae* 2.37; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 152.

47 For a convincing argument that the battle on the *campus Vogladensis* happened at Vouillé, northwest of Poitiers, not at Voulon, located south of the city: Mathisen, "Vouillé, Voulon."

48 Similar to biblical Jericho, the city walls of Angoulême reportedly fell by virtue of Clovis's mere thoughts, so imbued was he with God's grace; *Historiae* 2.37; cf. Joshua 1:6-27.

49 Mathisen, "Clovis, Anastasius and Political Status."

50 *Historiae* 2.37-38.

orthodox king employing deceptive tactics along with military might to best his foes.[51] The first tale recounts how Clovis tempted the young Frank Chloderic to act upon his greed (*cupiditate seductus*) and murder his own father, King Sigibert the Lame, which the youth did. Gregory hinted at the impending consequence the parricide would incur with the following: "By the judgment of God Chloderic fell into the pit he had dug for his own father."[52] Gregory apparently was fond of utilizing this passage, Proverbs 26:27 to forecast a poetically just fatality. Here he coupled the Bible verse with *iudicium Dei*. To that effect, Gregory narrated that when Chloderic proudly showed off his dead father's treasure to Clovis's envoys, the latter split the man's skull with an axe. Another axe in the skull! Gregory followed up this latest installment of the running gag with an understated comment that the unworthy (*indignus*) son sustained what he meted on the father.[53] Our author next related how Clovis, having orchestrated both royals' demises, spoke to an assemblage of Franks at Cologne where he denied culpability for their rulers' deaths. About the younger king's decease Clovis explained: "While Chloderic was showing his father's treasure, he was struck by somebody whom I do not know and he perished (*interiit*)."[54] Here Gregory playfully supplied the telltale term connotative of the villain's condemnation ironically coming from the mouth of the very person who arranged the youngster's death. Our author will have expected readers to share his reasoning that Chloderic would not have "perished" had he not been *cupididate seductus* in the first place. Gregory next caused Clovis to bald-faced lie to the Franks by denying he played a part in the murders and by claiming he would never shed a relative's blood.[55] Presumably the writer expected his audience to assume that unlike Clovis's soldiers, Sigibert and Chloderic's troops were still pagan, and therefore it was of no consequence for the king to treat them dishonestly. The warriors at Cologne accepted Clovis's offer to become their leader. Gregory concluded the anecdote by indicating how the victorious king accumulated unto himself Sigibert's

51 Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 49, characterizes Gregory's chronology for Clovis battling his relations towards the end of his life as plausible, although ultimately indeterminable. Heather, *Restoration of Rome*, 211, likens the campaigns to "a series of mafia-like hits organized in part by insiders, but certainly in a rush, at the end of the reign."

52 *Historiae* 2.40; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 155.

53 *Historiae* 2.40: *Et sic quae in patre egerat indignus incurrit*. Goffart, *Narrators*, 212-13, suggested that repetition of the axe in the skull motif made the "grim joke" a central satirical image connotative of Frankish ethnicity.

54 *Historiae* 2.40; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 155.

55 *Historiae* 2.40.

kingship, treasure, and people. Readers were to interpret these spoils as signs of God's divine favor towards the orthodox hero.

In the next chapter, Gregory related how Clovis went to war against another relative named Chararic.[56] In the ensuing struggle Clovis captured the other king along with his son and then generously forced both of the vanquished men to abdicate and enter the church, but not without extending to each a respectable position, priest and deacon, respectively. Afterwards Clovis received word that Chararic and son were plotting to leave the church and kill him, and so he ordered that the pair be decapitated. Gregory would have been utterly appalled by the duo's rejection of the providentially given ecclesiastical offices, regardless of the coercive nature by which the opportunity had materialized. The two should have recognized their appointments as a merciful gesture on God's part and immediately set about rectifying the condition of their souls. As in the previous tale Gregory ended this anecdote by noting how Clovis gained a kingdom, a treasure and a people. This chapter does not exhibit humor like the prior one. Apparently the bishop thought the topic of people quitting the church was no laughing matter.[57]

In the third chapter, Gregory detailed how Clovis opposed King Ragnachar of Cambrai, who reportedly was debauched, committed incest, and shared in his vices with an equally perverted adviser named Farro.[58] When Clovis learned that the Franks under Ragnachar's command were prepared to turn on their horrid king, he bribed the latter's *leudes* to conspire with him and gave them (counterfeit) gifts of gold. Clovis bested Ragnachar in battle, and as the loser fled the field his own soldiers seized him and carried him

56 *Historiae* 2.41. Gregory offered that the reason Clovis attacked Chararic was because the latter, years earlier, had refused to side with the great king in his war versus Syagrius, opting instead to wait it out and support the winner.

57 Compare this story with Gregory's tale of the Breton count Macliaw. The writer recounted that Macliaw, upon being deprived of power by his brother, became the bishop of Vannes. When his brother died, Macliaw renounced the ecclesiastical position, retrieved his wife, and seized his brother's lands. After remarking that other bishops excommunicated Macliaw, Gregory promised to describe his *interitus* subsequently; *Historiae* 4.4. Sixty-three chapters later, Gregory addressed how Macliaw broke another oath, this one to protect a deceased Breton chief's son, whom Macliaw instead dispossessed. In the end the young Breton turned the tables and slew Macliaw along with one of his sons. Although the author mentioned how Macliaw's opponent enjoyed God's mercy, he never linked the count's death with the oaths he had broken, nor with his presumably excommunicate status. Instead, he expected readers to make these connections on their own. Gregory did, however, indicate Macliaw's fate, not only at the end of the saga's first chapter, but in the latter chapter's title, *De interitu Macliavi*; *Historiae* 5.16. On the Franks and Bretons: Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 159-60; Chedéville, "Francs et Bretons."

58 *Historiae* 2.42.

along with his brother Ricchar to the great monarch. Gregory was back in humorous mode in this anecdote, for he caused Clovis to level sardonic remarks aimed at the two rulers' embarrassing bound condition before cleaving each of their skulls with his axe.[59] Eventually Clovis caused a third brother of Ragnachar and Ricchar to be rounded up and executed. Again the writer noted how Clovis secured his opponents' kingdom and treasure. He further added that there were other kings and relatives whose deaths Clovis similarly instigated. Gregory ended this penultimate chapter of *Historiae* 2 with an amusing scene wherein the king stood before another assembly of Franks and feigned despair over his lack of relations in hopes that he might lure some more of his kin forward and kill them, too.[60]

Although Gregory's Clovis cunningly deceived his opponents and hurled viciously ironic jokes prior to cutting them down, irony did not characterize the author's intent in his storytelling at *Historiae* 2.40-42. Far from expecting his audience to read these anecdotes as "encounters of bad with worse," the writer intended readers to romp along with the righteous royal protagonist as he justifiably leveled insults and axe blows on his moral opposites.[61]

59 After Clovis killed Ragnachar and Ricchar, the magnates whom the former had bribed finally realized that the gifts they had received were merely bronze items gilded with gold. When they complained about the fraud, Clovis mocked them, too, saying, "This is the kind of gold which a man can expect when he deliberately lures his lord to death"; *Historiae* 2.42; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 157. Even before Gregory depicted Clovis jokingly taunting Ragnachar prior to killing him, the writer humorously caused Ragnachar's own spies to reply to the king's query about the number of soldiers Clovis's army contained by throwing an annoying phrase Ragnachar habitually used back in his face. This phrase mentioned the king and "his Farro." Gregory modeled the retort on an acerbic quip from Macrobius's *Saturnalia*; Shanzer, "Laughter and Humour," 34-35.

60 The lament is a play on 2 Samuel 9.1 as identified by Wynn, "Wars and Warriors," 26 with n. 209.

61 *Contra* Goffart, *Narrators*, 218, who wrote: "There is no mistaking the mode of these stories. They are all ironic encounters of bad with worse, leaving it for us to decide whether Clovis or his victims were more depraved." I think Gregory really relished the opportunity this spool afforded him to unleash sanctimonious venom on Clovis's impious enemies. Unlike the more complex society of his own day, a world peopled mostly with apathetic orthodox Christians indifferent to churchmen's earnest appeals for them to beware the trappings of this world and repent, the temporally distant and religiously bifurcated world of Clovis was subject to blatant caricature, and all the fun that might entail (so much as a late ancient Christian writer was capable of allowing oneself some amusement). Additionally, Gregory the moralist was not a satirist; *contra* Goffart, ibid., 197-203. For the scenes under discussion to be satire, Gregory would have had to disapprove of Clovis's conniving and vicious jokes. But in fact, he enjoyed this trickery and some other examples, too; Wynn, "Wars and Warriors," 23-24. More generally, Danuta Shanzer, "Laughter and Humour," 32-33, deems Goffart's proposal that Gregory could have learned about Roman satire from Fortunatus to be overly conjectural. She writes: "No satirical self-consciousness and no generic markers appear in Gregory, because he was not writing satire"; ibid., 33. Raymond

Sporadic injections of playfulness did not deter the author from making the same sober moral points he conveyed elsewhere in his work, particularly lessons meant for kings. Caricature notwithstanding, Gregory expected readers to perceive Clovis exactly as he rendered him in a final, biblically charged sentence at *Historiae* 2.40. There Gregory had written: "For daily God submitted the enemies of Clovis to his dominion and increased his kingdom, for he walked before Him with an upright heart and did what was pleasing in His sight."[62] Although he never explicitly declared that Clovis was a *novus David*, this passage drawing from multiple Old Testament references to that Israelite king betrays how the bishop intended readers to associate Clovis with the biblical monarch.[63] Clovis was not subject to Gregory's usual prohibitions against committing fratricide and using deceptive tactics because the foes he vanquished at *Historiae* 2.40-42 were either pagans or, even worse, *impii* who relinquished clerical office. Unlike their grace-laden relative Clovis, the other kings were "still enveloped by fanatical errors" when they expired.[64] Correspondingly, Gregory entitled

Van Dam, *Saints*, 148, points out how Gregory's frequent optimism and sensitivities for family, friends, and saints do not square with those of a satirist.

62 *Historiae* 2.40; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 156. Goffart, *Narrators*, 218, did not believe Gregory meant this commentary to be taken literally. He characterized *Historiae* 2.40-42 as an "unedifying series" and suggested that if Gregory really "meant to justify Clovis's murderous duplicity," he would have been better served by skimming over this period of the king's rule; ibid.

63 Goffart, *Narrators*, 218-19, alternatively took the comment to associate Clovis with other "highly ambiguous kings" of the Old Testament who "were hardly Christians." Goffart, ibid., 218, therefore deduced that Gregory's Clovis amounted to a profoundly defective sort of hero. Louis Halphen, "Grégoire de Tours," 242-43, likened Clovis's conduct to that of Ehud as depicted at Judges 3.15-26. The problem there is that Ehud was not a king. William Monroe, "*Via Iustitiae*," 111 with n. 112, has claimed that Gregory was comparing Clovis with King Solomon, following 1 Kings 9:4. While in that passage the Lord exhorts Solomon to walk faithfully with an upright heart, it also credits David with having acted in that manner. See also 1 Kings 15:5, a reference to David doing "what was pleasing in the Lord's sight." It seems best to take Gregory's Clovis as a "type" for David. Heinzelmann, "Clovis dans le discours," 90, contended that Gregory's mention of David and Goliath at *Historiae* 2 prologue prefigures the reference to Clovis and Alaric II at *Historiae* 3 prologue, thereby making Clovis a David "type." More convincing is the analysis of Phillip Wynn, "Wars and Warriors," 26, who identified David as the primary inspiration for Gregory's Clovis based on a comparison of several lines from *Historiae* 2.40-42 with passages from 2 Samuel. I am not inclined, however, to share Wynn's assertion that Gregory intended Clovis to appear as something less than his ideal type of king. Reydellet, *La royauté*, 403, somewhat similarly posited that while Gregory's Clovis was a successful conquering instrument of divine providence, he was not "un modèle du bon roi." Otherwise, see Wynn, "Wars and Warriors," 32, for further parallels between Gregory's presentation of Clovis's parents and tales from 1 Samuel.

64 James, *The Franks*, 78-79, writes: "[Gregory's], conviction that Clovis 'knew the grace of God' may have led him to show some of Clovis's sordid crimes in what seems to us to be an oddly favourable light." Gregory pointed out how Clovis knew God's grace at *Historiae* 5 prologue.

the three chapters on the reprobates' demises: *De interitu Sigiberthi senioris et filii eius*, *De interitu Chararici et filii eius*, and *De interitu Ragnachari et fratrum eius*.[65] Through the word *interitu* Gregory announced the infernal fates for all of these men, who persisted in their delusional ways up to the moment they incurred their deserved deaths at the hands of God's orthodox champion.

In contrast to him heralding the hellbound status of Clovis's foes in three successive *capitula*, our author forewent indicating an eternal fate in the title of the chapter recounting Clovis's demise. In the chapter's narrative, however, he was more forthcoming on the monarch's fate.[66] Gregory succinctly presented Clovis's expiration as follows:

> When [his life's works] were done, [Clovis] died (*obiit*) at Paris and was buried in the basilica of the Holy Apostles which he had built with Queen Clotild. Furthermore, he migrated (*migravit*) in the fifth year after the battle at Vouillé. Thus, from the passing (*transitu*) of Saint Martin to the passing (*transitum*) of King Clovis … are figured 112 years.[67]

Here our author attested to Clovis's devotion by mentioning how he was responsible for building a significant church in which he himself was buried.[68] Gregory plainly communicated to readers the saved status of Clovis's soul by deploying both of the words he favored for connoting souls "passing" heavenwards, *transitum* and *migravit*. By placing the word *migravit* in a sentence referring to the battle of Vouillé, the writer invited his audience to

65 *Hist*, 2.40-42 *capitula*.

66 *Contra* Goffart, *Narrators*, 220, who wrote: "As to whether Clovis had also gained admittance to heaven, there was no information." In contrast to Goffart's ascription of semi-heroism to an otherwise depraved Clovis, Louis Halphen, "Grégoire de Tours," 236, asserted that Gregory effectively regarded the king as "presque un saint." This characterization is rather confusing. By "virtual saint" did Halphen mean that Gregory never depicted Clovis personally performing miracles while he presented him regularly benefiting from God's miraculous support? In an article published subsequent to his *Gregor von Tours*, Heinzelmann, "Clovis dans le discours," 88-92, went so far as to contend that *Historiae* 2 amounts to a hagiography for "Saint" Clovis. Heinzelmann, ibid., 89 n. 8, reasoned that Gregory did not require a cult for one to be deemed a saint.

67 *Historiae* 2.43: *His ita transactis, apud Parisius obiit, sepultusque in basilica sanctorum apostolorum, quam cum Chrodechilde regina ipse construxerat. Migravit autem post Vogladinse bellum anno quinto. A transitu ergo sancti Martini usque ad transitum Chlodovechi regis … supputantur anni CXII.*

68 Gregory mirrored a tactic Fortunatus deployed in his epitaphs of referencing church benefaction and charitable giving while situating the soul of a deceased person in paradise; e. g., Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmina* 4.1, 4.5, 4.8, 4.18, 4.21, 4.23, 4.25, 4.26, 4.27.

appreciate the king's fate while simultaneously recalling the part that the *novus* David had played in that providentially arranged military engagement versus the heretical Alaric II.

As with the results of the king's later wars against his relations, so for the aftermath of Vouillé, Gregory interpreted Clovis's accumulation of territories and peoples not only as a sign of divine favor, but as an indicator of the king's impending salvation, just has he imagined the royal foes' earthly losses to symbolize their condemnation. Gregory addressed this concept of associating worldly trappings and afterlife at *Historiae* 3 prologue, which immediately follows the chapter recounting Clovis's death. The theme for this prologue is the contrast between the fortuitous outcomes for defenders of the Trinity and the disasters that attend its opponents.[69] After listing several Old Testament figures whom God had favored, Gregory turned to examples from *nostra tempora*, writing:

> Arius, that evil man, the founder of that evil sect, deposited his entrails in the lavatory and so was exposed to the infernal flames; Hilary, on the other hand, who defended the undivided Trinity and was sent into exile for having done so, regained his homeland and also paradise. [Likewise] King Clovis confessed [the Trinity], crushed the heretics with divine help and enlarged his dominium through all of Gaul; but Alaric, who refused to accept [the Trinity], was therefore deprived of his kingdom and people and more than that, his eternal life.[70]

This passage identifies Alaric and Arius among those heretics "who do not gain much, and from what they seem to possess they lose even that."[71] Also to be included in that lot are the Arian rulers of Burgundy, Godigisel, Gundobad, and Godomar, whom our author reintroduced towards the end of the same prologue. There Gregory explained that these kings' *interitus* proved (*Probavis*) his point about heretics "losing what they seemed to possess," specifically "their homeland and souls simultaneously."[72] Not only did Alaric II and the Burgundians seem to possess visible kingdoms, peoples, and treasures, this last passage suggests that their momentary hold on these blessings convinced them they were due to receive eternal life as well. Instead, these opponents

69 Cf. Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 125-26.

70 *Historiae* 3 prologue; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 161.

71 *Historiae* 3 prologue: *heretici vero nec adquerunt melius, sed quod videntur habere, aufertur ab ei.*

72 *Historiae* 3 prologue: *Probavit hoc Godigisili, Gundobadi, atque Godomari interitus, qui et patriam simul et animas perdiderunt.*

of the Trinity lost the visible trappings of power and simultaneously their souls. As for Clovis, Gregory situated him in the prologue alongside Saint Hilary among those "true believers" (*vere credentibus*) from whom the Devil might take material possessions in this life (which, Gregory reported, actually happened to Hilary, but not to Clovis), but to whom the Lord gives back "a hundredfold," *scilicet*, through the grant of eternal life.[73] Gregory would have imagined he was being more than obvious in indicating at *Historiae* 2.42 and *Historiae* 3 prologue his assessment of the Gallic David's salvation.

However, the bishop did not simply interpret the accumulation of worldly goods by a Catholic king as a sign of salvation. To attain paradise such a king needed also to revere the saints and protect the orthodox churches during his lifetime. To make this argument Gregory again drew on Clovis's example at *Historiae* 5 prologue, where he chastised those Merovingians who had waged civil warfare during the mid-570s for acting greedily and sowing discord. At the conclusion of this prologue the writer admonished his royal audience to adopt Paul's advice and strive to combat the flesh, pursue virtues, overcome vices, and serve Christ instead of *cupiditas*. But while he urged the Merovingians to concentrate on the internal struggle being fought inside every individual, he did not discount the usefulness of warfare.[74] In contrast to the fratricidal conflict that raged at the start of his episcopacy, Gregory reminded readers of the sort of wars Clovis had fought, and the worldly results he garnered: "Just think of all that Clovis achieved, Clovis, the founder of your victorious country, who slaughtered enemy kings, conquered hostile peoples (*noxias gentes*) and captured their territories, thus bequeathing to you absolute and unquestioned dominion over them!"[75] This passage indicates that by fighting wars against hostile

73 Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 125, acknowledged Gregory's explicit mention of Alaric losing his soul but did not comment on what if anything the prologue indicated about Clovis's fate. After citing Gregory's passage about the Lord giving back "a hundredfold" Heinzelmann only pointed out the line's this-worldly implication: "God is therefore shown to be an ever-present and active force in history"; ibid. Again, it appears that subsequent to the German version of his book Heinzelmann interpreted *Historiae* 2 as a *vita* and acknowledged Clovis as a member of the elect; "Clovis dans le discours," 90-92. Helmut Reimitz, "Providential Past," 115, has recognized how Gregory intended the contrast of figures in *Historiae* 3 prologue to include an otherworldly implication for the Frank king: "…while the enemies of the king had lost their *regna*, *patriae*, *populi* and, what is even worse, their souls, Clovis the confessor extended his regnum *per totas Gallias* and his life to eternal existence in the *regnum Dei*."

74 *Contra* Goffart, *Narrators*, 220. Guy Halsall, "Preface to Book V," 303, accurately argues that while Gregory thought warfare in general was bad, the writer condoned foreign wars, especially those waged versus heretics.

75 *Historiae* 5 prologue; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 253, slightly modified. Gregory modelled his concept of *noxiae gentes* on the Old Testament *goyyim*: Wynn, "Wars and Warriors," 2-6.

foreigners and heretics, Clovis enlarged his regnum, and what is more, he achieved what Sigibert, Chilperic and Guntram did not accomplish though their internecine struggles: he secured peace. Gregory opined: "If only you kings had occupied yourselves with wars like those in which your ancestors larded the ground with their sweat, then the other races of the earth, filled with awe at the peace which you imposed, might have been subjected to your power!"[76] While our author undoubtedly admired the sort of peace-makers who achieved their goal through diplomacy and mediation, approaches he expected all bishops to practice, he acknowledged how kings could secure peace in the aftermath of successful wars versus heretics and foreign opponents.[77] But to make this possible required that a king first succeed in the inner struggle against vices and opt to serve Christ. This is what Gregory imagined Clovis had accomplished. Again, the bishop berated the combatants of the mid-570s for not being able to keep peace. The reason they could not do that was because they did not "know the grace of God."[78] What Gregory insinuated here was that Clovis did know God's grace. As the narrative for the king's life at *Historiae* 2 indicates, Clovis had been imbued with an abundance of grace during his baptism, and he never relinquished it, because, when he fought his wars he was mindful to respect the saints, particularly Hilary and Martin, and to protect their churches.[79] This is the sort of warfare Gregory wanted his royal readers to pursue, not on account of the glory a monarch might accrue, nor for any imperial implications, but by virtue of the peace which could be extended under a king who knew God's grace. Despite the caricatured nature of Gregory's Clovis in *Historiae* 2, this is the kind of ideal king the

76 *Historiae* 5 prologue; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 253.

77 On episcopal peace-makers: James, "*Beati pacifici*"; Halfond, "War and Peace." An example of Clovis securing peace after a foreign war is the contest versus the Alamans, after which the king mercifully complied when the defeated people begged him to end the violence; *Historiae* 2.30. On the idea that Gregory had a "just war theory": Wynn, "Wars and Warriors," 6-8. On peace as a Merovingian ideal: Murray, "*Pax et disciplina*." See also Kershaw, *Peaceful Kings*, 119-31.

78 *Historiae* 5 prologue; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 253. For the idea that Gregory accepted a divine origin for royal authority, and therefore he concentrated only on *how* kings exercised that authority: Keely, "Early Medieval Narrative," 140-41.

79 From 585 onwards, the two dominant Frankish kings, Guntram and Childebert II, in fact campaigned several times into foreign lands. But the latter did not enjoy unmitigated success, because, unlike what happened during Clovis's campaigns, their generals and rank and file soldiers either desecrated churches or despoiled Gallic lands in the process; *Historiae* 8.30: Guntram's army into Spain; 10.3: Childebert II's army into Italy. See also *Historiae* 10.9: Guntram's army into Brittany, with atrocities committed; 8.18, 9.25: Childebert II's army into Italy, but no mention of atrocities; 9.31: Guntram's army into Spain, but no mention of atrocities.

writer preferred to think Clovis had been.[80] Although no Merovingian achieved this level of kingship since, this also was the kind of ruler Gregory probably hoped might arise again, perhaps through a studious reading of his corpus and adoption of its lessons.

As for Clovis's partner, Queen Clotild lived thirty-three years beyond her husband's demise. During that time, she became a religious at Tours. By virtue of her affiliation with that city, coupled with whatever role she actually did play in leading her husband to embrace the orthodox faith, Gregory probably felt obligated from the outset to paint Clotild in a positive light. Complicating any such intention was the fact the widowed queen embroiled herself in the political machinations of her sons. Apparently the writer felt that two well-known incidents suggestive of fault within the queen's character were potentially damaging enough to demand consideration in the *Historiae*. First, in 523 Clotild reportedly encouraged her three sons to seek revenge on her behalf by making war on Kings Sigismund and Godomar of Burgundy, whose father, Gundobad, had murdered her father some thirty years prior.[81] Although the war that followed resulted in the Franks momentarily occupying the Burgundian realm in the second year of fighting, an unforeseen result of the initial campaign was the untimely and violent demise of the queen's son, King Chlodomer.[82]

80 Another general about whose character traits Gregory expressed admiration was Aetius, whom the bishop read about from the history of Renatus Frigeridus; *Historiae* 2.8. Gregory was struck by the lack of avarice and cupidity in the man. But what may have impressed him most about Aetius was a combination of the Roman general's dual virtues, that he was "very skilled in warfare and famous in the skill of [securing] peace" (*bellis aptissimus, pacis artibus celebris*). The last trait especially was what the bishop wished Gaul's contemporary leaders of war to embrace. It comes as no surprise that Gregory exhibited considerable knowledge about military stratagems in the *Historiae*; see Bachrach, "Gregory of Tours." Walter Goffart was correct to point out, however, that Gregory, like other late ancient writers, valued confessors and martyrs as the true heroes of Christian society rather than military commanders; Goffart, "Conspicuously Absent," 384. I do not think Gregory intended to undercut his positive image of Aetius by including Renatus's mention that the general marshalled Huns on behalf of his sovereign, the tyrant John, in opposition to Valentinian; *contra* Loseby, "Gregory of Tours," 474. After all, Gregory made it clear in his own words at the chapter's end that the anecdote's real villain was Valentinian, who killed Aetius without cause and then was himself killed while ranting from his throne. Neither was this a case of "bad versus worse"; ibid, 475. For Gregory had credited Aetius with achieving victory over Attila in a battle providentially determined through God answering Saint Anianus of Orléans' prayers; *Historiae* 2.8.

81 *Historiae* 3.6. On the unlikelihood of Gregory's tale about Clotild's revenge: Wood, "Gregory of Tours and Clovis," 253; Helvétius," "De l'assassinat," 41. On Gregory's device of portraying wars as vengeful episodes among family members: Rosenwein, "Les émotions de la vengeance."

82 The Franks would only permanently take Burgundy in 534; *Historiae* 3.11; Marius of Avenches, *Chronica* s. a. 534.

Following this calamity, the grief-stricken woman undertook nurturing her three orphaned grandsons at Paris. The second event problematic to memorializing Clovis's widow happened about a year later when Clotild's remaining sons, Childebert I and Chlothar I, determined to seize their vulnerable nephews' patrimony.[83] The brothers tricked their mother by proclaiming they were going to elevate Chlodomer's sons to the throne. But no sooner did the elated queen send her grandchildren to their uncles, the latter dispatched a messenger to the lady who held up a pair of sheers and a sword and demanded that she choose between committing the children to the church or being slain. According to Gregory, Clotild was so overwrought with grief, she ignored the man's words and merely said: "If they are not to ascend the throne, it would suffice for me to see them dead rather than shorn."[84] Gregory provided readers with an opportunity to excuse Clotild by making it clear that she tendered this statement during a moment of overwhelming sorrow. He further sought to exonerate her by quickly shifting blame to the messenger, who happened to be none other than Arcadius of Clermont, whom Gregory blamed for the devastation wrought on the Auvergne around 524.[85] The writer explained that Arcadius did not give sufficient regard to Clotild's tormented state of mind when he made the shocking offer; nor did he inquire as to whether the queen wished to reconsider her rash remark.[86] Instead, the villain darted back to the two kings' lair outside Paris, where Clothar immediately seized ahold of two of his nephews and murdered them. A third child, Chlodovald, had eluded capture earlier and therefore managed to survive. Gregory next depicted Clotild tending to the burial of the two deceased boys.[87] Because

83 *Historiae* 3.18.

84 *Historiae* 3.18; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 181.

85 Seven chapters previous to that recounting the murder of Clotild's grandchildren, Gregory depicted how the devious Arcadius foolishly invited Childebert I to occupy the Auvergne, and even granted him entry to Clermont, after a rumor circulated that Theuderic I had been killed while warring in the east. Theuderic in fact was not dead, and upon his return to Gaul the king subjected the Auvergne to a brutal occupation, which was followed by an extended reign of terror wrought by Duke Sigivald; *Historiae* 3.9-10, 12-13, 16. All of the miseries which the Auvergnians, particularly Gregory's paternal family members, experienced in 524 and afterwards and which the author related in multiple books are traceable to Arcadius's ambition and stupidity.

86 *Historiae* 3.18: *At ille parum admirans dolorem eius, nec scrutans, quid deinceps plenius pertractaret…*

87 *Historiae* 3.18. Gregory's effort to mitigate damage to the widowed Clotild's reputation compares with how he handled Clovis towards the end of *Historiae* 2. While the writer depicted the warrior king deceiving and dispatching his relatives, he always provided readers with some reason to imagine the king was justified in his treatment of the reprobates. Similarly, Gregory vindicated Clotild of her son's death by describing how Clodomer's demise

the author apparently felt it impossible to ignore the queen's regrettable actions of 523 and 524 in his text, he instead crafted the boys' murder into a "watershed moment," after which the queen would aspire to merit God's absolution.[88] Gregory fit Clotild's twenty years of contrite conduct into the space of a mere two and a half chapters, wherein he simultaneously built the case for her salvation.

After depicting Clotild sorrowfully burying her grandchildren, Gregory spent the remainder of *Historiae* 3 drawing a parallel between the queen and the single survivor of Chlodomer's line, Chlodovald.[89] About this Merovingian he succinctly wrote: "Setting aside [concern for] the earthly realm, by these acts [Chlodovald] passed to the Lord (*ad Dominum transiit*). After cutting his hair with his own hands he became a cleric. He then persisted in good works and became a priest until he migrated from the world (*ab hoc mundo migravit*)."[90] Just as the saintly Chlodovald conducted good works, so did Clotild now apply herself in the business of Christ. The queen became assiduous in alms and avid in vigils while showing herself to be chaste and pure. She distributed estates among churches and monasteries. So great was her generosity, she was thought in her lifetime to be less a queen than "God's maidservant" (*Dei ancilla*).[91] Gregory declared: "Neither her sons' kingdom nor wealth nor earthly ambition could bring her to ruin, but instead humility bore her forth unto [God's] grace."[92] Before tending to the matter of the queen's decease, Gregory provided one last chapter concerning the living Clotild. When it came to her attention that Kings Childebert and Theudebert were sinfully preparing to make war versus their own brother, Chlothar, Clotild responded by kneeling before Saint Martin's tomb and praying all night that war would be avoided. The next day thunder, lightning, and hailstones battered the aggressors' camps so thoroughly, Childebert and Theudebert decided to stay the conflict. Gregory blurred the lines as to who was due credit for causing the war's bloodless

ultimately was not the mother's fault but his own, as will soon be seen. About Clotild burying her grandchildren, the queen reportedly put the boys' corpses on the bier, joined in the funeral procession, and oversaw their interment alongside one another in Saint-Peter's at Paris. Gregory further heightened the pathos with a last remark that the two were only ten and seven years old. How fascinating that he imagined their souls to be damned, on which see below, pp. 233-34.

88 Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 42.

89 Ibid.

90 *Historiae* 3.18.

91 For the wide-ranging usage of metaphors of service in late ancient texts: Bailey, *Religious Worlds*, 43-51.

92 *Historiae* 3.18; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 182.

conclusion by characterizing the miracle as the product of Martin's power through the queen's protracted effort.[93]

Perceiving that the queen was now verging on sainthood, Gregory honored Clotild by placing her obituary as the first chapter of *Historiae* 4, entitled *De obitu Chrodigildis reginae*.[94] As he did for Clovis he indicated only the queen's this-worldly demise in the *capitulum* announcing her death. In the narrative he recounted her demise thusly: "Then Queen Clotild, full of days and rich in good works, died (*obiit*) at Tours during the episcopacy of Injuriosus."[95] Here Gregory again employed the noncommittal word *obiit* to report Clotild's death; however, to this he added *plena dierum bonisque operibus*, recalling Chronicles 23:1. By this phrase, generally reserved for obvious saints, the writer intimated that the queen, who had committed her later life to righteous pursuits, achieved salvation.[96] Gregory ended the brief obituary by recording that Clotild's corpse was borne in procession to the accompaniment of psalms to Paris (all the way from Tours?). As Erin Dailey has astutely remarked, the queen's transferal was "an event that calls to mind the translation of a saint's relics."[97] Clotild was buried in the Holy Apostles' church alongside Clovis, Gregory's *novus* David, and Geneviève, Paris's great patron saint of that era.[98] Just as our author fashioned Clovis

93 *Historiae* 3.28. Dailey sums up this anecdote nicely: "The new Clotild drew upon heavenly resources, rather than her earthly means, to end, rather than instigate, conflict between kinsmen"; Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 42.

94 *Historiae* 4.1 *capitulum*.

95 *Historiae* 4.1; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 197: *Igitur, Chrodigildis regina, plena dierum bonisque operibus praedita, apud urbem Turonicam obiit…*

96 Gregory used the term *plenus dierum* for eight saints: *Historiae* 1.26 (Apostle John), 1.29 (Photinus of Lyons), 1.45 (Illidius of Clermont), 4.19 (Medard of Noyon), 4.32 (Julian of Randau), 4.37 (Friardus); *GC* 22 (Maximus of Chinon), 84 (Sylvester of Chalon). He used it once in reference to a fellow Austrasian, Duke Bodigisel. Other than the fact that Bodigisel was long-lived and his properties reverted to his sons, nothing more is known; *Historiae* 5.14. Gregory apparently thought he was a righteous individual. The writer used *plenus dierum* ironically in reference to another duke, Guntram Boso, providing the words through a soothsayer's errant prediction; *Historiae* 8.22. About Clotild, the author of the early eight-century *Liber historiae Francorum* elaborated on Gregory's wording for the queen's demise to more explicitly indicate how she attained salvation: *bonae memoriae Chrodochildis regina bonis operibus praedita apud urbem Turonicam migravit ad Dominum plena dierum*; *LHF* 27, *MGH* SRM 2, 285. Clotild was regarded as a bona fide, miracle-working saint by the ninth century as attested by a *vita* from that era; *Vita Clotildis*, *MGH* SRM 2, 341-48.

97 Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 43.

98 It seems Gregory expected the royal couple's burial *ad sanctam* alongside Geneviève to impress. On the likelihood that Clovis and Clotild were associated with the aged Parisian religious while she lived, and promoted the cult after her death in 502: Heinzelmann and Poulin, *Les Vies anciennes*. On burial *ad sanctos*: Effros, *Caring for the Body*, 75-78, 151-56; Duval, *Auprès*

into an ideal king whose behavior exemplified the kinds of warfare, internal and external, Frankish rulers should wage, so did he mold Clotild into the ideal righteous royal wife and widow.[99] The souls of both exemplars, he concluded, reside in paradise.

King Theudebert

Just as he concentrated on Saint Martin and King Clovis in *Historiae* 1 and 2, Gregory selected the career of King Theudebert I on which to focus in *Historiae* 3, which book ends (almost) with a chapter on his death.[100] In the same way that Gregory's programmatic presentation of Clotild during her years as a widow likely originated from traditions kept among the people of Tours, the author undoubtedly derived his tales about Theudebert in heavy measure from family anecdotes. Theudebert governed over the Auvergne for the full fifteen years of his reign and he was fondly remembered by its people. Even though the line of Theudebert and his father Theuderic died out in 555, Gregory, and presumably others among his fellow Auvergnians who belonged to the Austrasian sub-kingdom in the latter decades of the

des saints corps. Had Gregory been familiar with Augustine's *De cura pro mortuis gerenda*, he would not have approved. The tract was the product of an exchange between Paulinus of Nola and Augustine around 420, which caused the latter to deny any benefits from being buried alongside the saints; Brown, *Ransom of the Soul*, 77-79.

99 About Clovis's marriage to Clotild, Erin Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 86, writes: "Gregory thus reinforced his argument that the right choice of bride brought a king both temporal and eternal prosperity." Another model royal widow was the first of Charibert's four wives, Queen Ingoberga. After having been set aside by her spouse, Ingoberga did not remarry. Gregory credited her wisdom and praised her persistent performance of vigils, prayers, and almsgiving; *Historiae* 9.26. He accepted the widow's claim that God granted a forewarning of her impending death. After the queen sent messengers to Gregory asking what she must do *ad animae remedium*, the bishop visited and together they drew up her will, which bequeathed properties to two cathedrals and to Saint Martin's basilica. Several months later Ingoberga contracted an illness and *migravit a saeculo*, at which point many of her slaves became free. Gregory's single-chapter obituary for Ingoberga constitutes a succinct roadmap for elite widows to follow: do not remarry, concentrate on pious and charitable pursuits, die, and advance to heaven.

100 Technically, Gregory reported Theudebert's demise in the next to last chapter of *Historiae* 3 after which followed a weather report on the brutal winter of 548/549. It is interesting that Gregory did not opt to end *Historiae* 3 with Clotild's *obitus* or use her in the computation of years at the end of *Historiae* 4. In fact, Gregory situated the chapter on Theudebert's death ahead of that for Clotild even though the king died a full four years after the queen expired. By putting Clotild's obituary in the first chapter of *Historiae* 4, Gregory was able to call attention to an ideal royal wife in that book, for which an important theme was the role of the character of a king's spouse in contributing to a realm's concord, or discord, as Gregory thought was more often the case; Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 86-87.

sixth century, considered Kings Sigibert and Childebert II as the rightful continuators of the *regnum Theuderici*.[101] Therefore, a combination of Gregory's Auvergnat parochialism and contemporary political identity contributed to him selecting Theudebert's demise to conclude *Historiae* 3.

Similar to the portrayal of the widow Clotild adjusting her attentions from secular to spiritual matters prior to her earthly departure, Gregory presented King Theudebert making an uphill climb towards righteousness. In a chapter from the *Miracula* the writer inserted a tale wherein Theudebert early in his reign acted disrespectfully towards Bishop Nicetius of Trier until a demon indicated how the king was jeopardizing his own soul, from which moment the ruler behaved properly towards the holy prelate.[102] In the *Historiae* Gregory attended to another of the ruler's early faults, improper relations with women. Our author explained that while Theudebert's father was still alive, the latter arranged his son's betrothal to a Lombard princess named Wisigard.[103] But when Theudebert was in Provence wresting cities away from the heretical Goths on Theuderic's behalf, he met a socially prominent, married matron named Deuteria, and, "captured by love for her" (*amore eius capitur*) entered into a relationship.[104] With the king's vice now established, Gregory next set about rehabilitating the figure's character; however, Theudebert's improvement proved a slow slog.[105] Gregory reported that after Theuderic's demise in 533, young Theudebert fended off his land hungry uncles, Childebert I and Chlothar I, secured his kingdom, and promptly married Deuteria.[106] After this Theudebert accepted an offer to ally with Childebert, who gave the other gifts which Theudebert then shared with Sigivald, a duke who had tormented the Auvergne during Theuderic's reign.[107] In the next chapter, Gregory suddenly and famously lauded the Frankish king as follows:

> Once he was firmly established on the throne, Theudebert proved himself to be a great king, distinguished by every virtue. He ruled his kingdom justly, respected his bishops, was liberal to the churches, relieved the

101 *Historiae* 4.22.

102 *VP* 7.2, and see above, p. 204 n. 16.

103 *Historiae* 3.20.

104 *Historiae* 3.22. The couple had two children, a daughter and a son, Prince Theudebald.

105 Lacking from Gregory's consideration of Theudebert's change in character is any watershed event like the slaughter of Clotild's grandchildren, after which the queen was made to act in strict accordance with the interests of God and His church.

106 *Historiae* 3.23.

107 *Historiae* 3.24.

> wants of the poor and distributed many benefits with piety and friendly goodwill. With great generosity he remitted to the churches in Clermont all the tribute which they used to pay to the royal treasury.[108]

This passage references two practices that would have drawn praise from Gregory for any king, showing proper deference to the poor and to God's churches in general, and affording some benefit to the Auvergnians and their churches in particular.[109] Following this encomium the writer doubled back to Theudebert's improper involvements with women. First, he further vilified Deuteria by relating how the matron had her own daughter drowned for fear that Theudebert would become attracted to her.[110] Next Gregory related that seven years after the king's engagement to Wisigard, Theudebert finally relented to the Franks' petitions, dismissed Deuteria, and wedded the princess. When the latter died shortly thereafter, the king took another for a wife. Gregory intended these details to indicate that Theudebert rectified his early libidinous habit; in that vein the author concluded *Historiae* 3.27 as follows: "Truly, the king never held Deuteria again!"[111]

However, Theudebert was not yet fully on the proper path towards salvation. In the following chapter Gregory depicted the ruler taking the field with his ally Childebert and marching to make war versus Chlothar. Fortunately for all parties concerned, this is when Queen Clotild nudged Saint Martin, who caused a thunderstorm to ravage the wrongdoers' forces. During the tempest hailstones lashed the camps and persons of the sinful aggressors, Theudebert and Childebert. The duo properly read the signs of

108 *Historiae* 3.25; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 185. Marius of Avenches, *Chronica* s. a. 548, when recording Theudebert's death labelled the monarch a *rex magnus*.

109 The lines are reminiscent of what one might expect for a eulogy.

110 *Historiae* 3.26. Specifically, Deuteria reportedly tossed the girl into a cart pulled by bulls which was driven into a river. Gregory entitled this chapter *De interitu filiae Deuteriae*; *Historiae* 3.26 *capitulum*. This is the single instance of *interitus* for which there seems to be no good explanation for why Gregory applied the term to the deceased. Did the bishop assess that the girl's soul perished because he interpreted her violent death as a sign of divine punishment? Did he know more about the rumors of the young woman's relationship with her stepfather than he was willing to admit? Did he think she was a seductress like her mother and actually deserved her fate? Compare with another woman for whom it is clearer why Gregory announced her *interitus* in a chapter title, Domnola. This twice-married aristocrat was killed along with several of her servants by Fredegund's referendary over a disputed vineyard; *Historiae* 8.32. In addition to being covetous, another of Domnola's worldly ways of which Gregory would not have approved was her decision to remarry. Gregory intended the tale of Domnola's "perishing" to constitute a valuable lesson for how widows should not conduct themselves; cf. Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 22.

111 *Historiae* 3.27: *Verum tamen Deuteriam ultra non habuit*.

God's wrath and responded accordingly by conducting penance and praying for the Lord to pardon them for contemplating an attack on their relative. Theudebert and Childebert then petitioned Chlothar to make peace, which the latter granted.[112] Thanks to Clotild and Martin's speedy meteorological intervention the two royals were prevented from committing the potentially soul-stealing misdeed which Gregory made a central theme of the *Historiae*, civil warfare.[113] The writer caused Childebert and Theudebert to act in the very manner he hoped royal readers of the *Historiae* would adopt rather than risking one's soul by sinfully making fratricidal warfare. But although Theudebert was absolved of his compunction to wage war against his relation, he still was not entirely repentant. When next one sees the king, he has joined with both of his uncles to avenge the murder of their female cousin in Italy. According to Gregory's erroneous account, King Theudat of Tuscany caused the woman, Amalasuintha, to be scalded to death in a steam bath. In response to this execution, the Frank kings threatened to seize Theudat's kingdom and kill him unless he handed over a large sum of gold. When Theudat complied and paid out the money, Childebert convinced Theudebert to join with him and deprive Chlothar of his share of the loot. Chlothar responded to his kin's greedy seizure by snatching the deceased Chlodomer's treasure for himself, thereby depriving his duplicitous relations of even more wealth than what they had denied him.[114]

At *Historiae* 3.32 Gregory next recounted how Theudebert invaded Italy. This war, waged against an Arian and foreign foe, was the sort of warfare our author generally could support. He reported how the king and his troops returned from the expedition with much wealth, but many others among his soldiers died of diseases during the campaign. Gregory credited Theudebert, again inaccurately, with besting the brilliant general Belisarius, causing the latter to be replaced with Narses. Furthermore, the writer claimed that King Theudebert sent Duke Buccelin into Italy and the latter conquered the entire peninsula and Sicily. By this campaign the king's treasury was filled with the spoils of war and tribute.[115] Gregory would have regarded such an accumulation of worldly riches as a sign

112 *Historiae* 3.28.

113 Civil war as central theme: *Historiae* 5 prologue; Halsall, "Preface to Book V."

114 *Historiae* 3.31.

115 *Historiae* 3.32. Compare with King Theudebert's own claim in a letter to Justinian that he ruled over lands stretching from the Ocean to Pannonia; *Epistulae Austrasicae* 20. Roger Collins substantiated the latter assertions and characterized Theudebert as "the most powerful ruler in west and central Europe" following Theodoric the Ostrogoth; Collins, "Theodebert I," with quote at 12. On Theudebert in Italy: Loseby, "Gregory of Tours," 479-80.

of divine favor, but only if the king who benefited was a defender of the churches and the poor. To that point, Gregory next described how, back in Gaul, King Theudebert righted a wrong his father had done by making recompense for the devastation the latter had wrought on Verdun.[116] "Moved by compassion," the king provided a mass of gold with which the city's bishop was able to resuscitate his beleaguered district.[117] It seems highly improbable that Bishop Desideratus would have waited a decade or so before petitioning Theudebert for moneys to revive his diocese, which Theuderic had reduced to penury. In fact, in the next chapter Gregory recounted how Bishop Desideratus's son, Syagrius, who had been dispossessed and tortured after being wrongly accused by a certain Syrivald during Theuderic's assault on Verdun, exacted vengeance versus his foe by sneaking to his villa and killing him.[118] Again, it is very unlikely Syagrius waited that long before acting against the former ruler's agent. It appears that our author moved these accounts of Desideratus requesting a loan and his son taking vengeance forwards in time in order to situate this tale evidencing Theudebert's *bonitas et clementia* proximate to the next chapter, which pertains to that monarch's expiration.

One recalls from Chapter 4 how Gregory provided a blatantly telling diptych to showcase the *bonus et clemens* King Theudebert's decease alongside the slaughter of one of his own, the evil tax-collector, Parthenius. The *capitulum* for the chapter relating the pair's deaths reads, *De obitu Theudoberthi et de interitu Partheni*.[119] Prior to Parthenius's expiration, the

116 Bishop Desideratus reportedly sent messengers to ask for funds upon observing the king's charity and liberality; *Historiae* 3.34.

117 *Historiae* 3.34; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 191. When Desideratus tried to return the loan, as he had promised he would, Theudebert refused, remarking that he was satisfied that Verdun's impoverished inhabitants recovered their affluence.

118 *Historiae* 3.35. Gregory went into some detail about this act of vengeance. Syagrius led an armed band on an assault of Syrivald's villa under the cover of a mist. When a man walked out of the manor house, the strike force killed him and then left thinking they had slain their prey. But one of Syrivald's slaves informed them that they had actually killed one of his lord's retainers. Syagrius and company then returned and stormed the villa. Unable to break through the door, they pulled down a wall to access their victim. Gregory reported that Syrivald's villa was located in the district of Dijon. This fact along with the amount of detail provided for the event suggests a likely source for the story was one of the writer's Burgundian relatives. Stories orally given by relations may account for most of Gregory's material in *Historiae* 3, which helps explain some of his errors; Wood, "Clermont and Burgundy," 120. The *capitulum* for the chapter on the demise of King Theuderic's heavy is titled *De interitu Syravaldi*; *Historiae* 3.35 *capitulum*.

119 *Historiae* 3.36 *capitulum*. Although the chapter recounting Theudebert's *obitus* follows directly after that which details the villainous Syrivald's *interitus*, it does not appear the author in this case expected readers to contrast the latter's "perishing" with the king's demise.

official's wife and friend visited their murderer in a dream to gloatingly inform him of the divine judgment he was about to receive. Shortly thereafter a mob pulled Parthenius from a church and stoned him to death. By the last word in the chapter, *interiit*, Gregory signaled to readers that Parthenius's judgment resulted in his soul "perishing." As for Theudebert, prior to the drawn out portrayal of the tax-collector's ruin, the author concisely related the following:

> While these things were happening, King Theudebert began to feel ill (*aegrotare coepit*). And although doctors applied their many skills to him, this garnered them nothing. That is because the Lord was demanding his immediate summons (*quia eum iam Dominus vocari iubebat*). Therefore, after being ill for a very long period and wasting from this infirmity, he relinquished his spirit (*reddidit spiritum*).[120]

This imagery of the king undergoing a prolonged illness gives pause for thought. Perhaps Gregory wrote this line in accordance with a well-known tradition in which Theudebert endured an extended infirmity before death. Instead of presenting the protracted illness as a consequence of sinfulness, Gregory portrayed it as the result of physicians applying their skills while being oblivious to God's intention. In the end the deity had his way and "summoned" (*vocari iubebat*) Theudebert's soul. The narrative's contents clarify the contrasting terminology of the diptych; Parthenius's soul resides in hell while Theudebert's rests in heaven.[121] Gregory concluded *Historiae* 3 with an abbreviated computation of years from Clovis's to Theudebert's death, which reads: *A transitu igitur Chlodovechi usque in transitum Theudoberthi conputantur anni 37*.[122] Here the writer deployed the telltale term *transitus* in reference to the expirations of the two righteous kings; thereby, Gregory succinctly intimated how Clovis's and Theudebert's souls have "passed" to heaven. Before we address the fourth and final individual by whose death the author calculated time in the computation of years at the end of *Historiae* 4, we will consider his musings about the other Merovingians who expired in the years leading up to Sigibert's assassination. That analysis will require directing our attention to hell.

120 *Historiae* 3.36.

121 Because the bitter winter detailed in the final chapter of *Historiae* 3 happened after the king's expiration, Gregory cannot have intended it as a portent announcing the king's death; *Historiae* 3.37.

122 *Historiae* 3.37.

Merovingians in Hell

King Chlodomer

While Gregory imagined that several Frankish royal family members merited salvation, he assessed that a larger number earned perdition. As he did for other condemned souls, the writer frequently communicated his own valuation of a royal's damnation through the words *interitus*, *iudicium Dei*, and *ultio divina*, alongside which he provided signs of divine disfavor in context of an individual engaging in wrongful behavior. One early Merovingian for whom Gregory arrived at a negative conclusion when interpreting the signs surrounding his demise was the first of Clovis's heirs to die in adulthood, King Chlodomer. We have already seen how Chlodomer followed the advice of his mother Clotild by joining his brothers to attack Kings Sigismund and Godomar of Burgundy in 523.[123] According to Gregory, during that war's initial campaign the Franks enjoyed early success. Godomar managed to elude capture, but Chlodomer apprehended Sigismund along with his wife and children. The Frank stashed his captives near Orléans and in the meantime Godomar regrouped. Before again marching against the latter Chlodomer determined it would be prudent to execute Sigismund and his family.[124] Voicing opposition to this gruesome decision was the holy Abbot Avitus of Micy. Besides the sheer wickedness of the deed, what would have vexed Avitus about Chlodomer's callous plan was that the victim, Sigismund, was the first Burgundian ruler to publicly acknowledge the Catholic faith. Furthermore, Sigismund had founded the famed monastery of Saint-Maurice d'Agaune, where the king reportedly performed long hours of penance to make amends after following the advice of his *iniqua* second wife and executing his own son.[125] Chlodomer was on

123 *Historiae* 3.6. On Sigismund's troubled reign: Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, 18-24.

124 Specifically, Gregory caused Chlodomer to point out that he wanted to avoid the possibility of being caught between two enemy armies. For the idea that the king's reasoning followed sound military strategy: Bachrach, "Gregory of Tours," 362.

125 *Historiae* 3.5. On the royal support behind the founding of Saint-Maurice d'Agaune, which was unique for the time: Wood, "Prelude to Columbanus." On the ever-evolving images of Saint Sigismund: Helvétius, "De l'assassinat"; Paxton, "Power to Heal." As Gregory told the tale, Sigismund's second wife had been a maidservant to the king's first spouse. The writer commented here that it was common practice for stepmothers to oppress their stepsons. Gregory planted the seeds for readers to find more fault with the wife than Sigismund by detailing how the woman convinced the king that his son had been conspiring to kill him and take the kingdom, and the Ostrogothic realm as well. Thus, it was by reason of self-defense that Sigismund ordered his servants to throttle the young man, which action the king immediately regretted.

the verge of killing his captives when Abbot Avitus appeared to him and proclaimed this prophecy:

> If you change your plans and refuse to have these people killed, you will go forth to victory. On the other hand, if you do kill them, you will fall into the hands of your enemies, and you will perish with a similar fate (*simile sorte peribis*). Whatever you do to Sigismund and his wife and children, you and your wife and children will incur.[126]

Chlodomer dismissed the abbot's warning as so much foolishness (*Stultum consilium*); he promptly murdered the prisoners, disposed of their corpses down a well, and then proceeded to take the field versus the Burgundians. In the ensuing battle Godomar tricked Chlodomer into rushing headlong into an ambush. The enemy decapitated the Frank king and displayed his head on a pike. As was typical of our author, rather than conclude the

126 *Historiae* 3.6; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 166. Gregory did not use *perire* to consistently intimate a soul's infernal condition the way he did with *interire*. He deployed *perire* in the past indicative more often to indicate the ruin of non-human items than humans: e. g. *Historiae* 1 prologue (study of letters), 6.39 (a city district), 6.46 (Chilperic's honor), 10.1 (wheat), 10.30 (hay). He also was as prone to use *perire* when referring to a "righteous" character's potential death as a "wicked" one: *Historiae* 2.37 (King Clovis), 4.51 (Chilperic).

A notable tactic with *perire* was for the writer to use it in direct discourse: *Historiae* 2.2, 2.7, 2.30, 2.32, 2.34, 3.6, 3.18, 4.30, 5.18, 5.20, 5.49, 6.46, 7.1, 7.8, 7.29, 7.34, 7.47, 8.30, 8.31, 9.10, 9.27, 9.29. Two instances from the *Historiae* involve portrayals of Gregory giving a speech and making mention of a soul perishing. In one chapter he presented himself at Praetextatus's trial quoting Ezekiel 33:6, "If the watchman sees the iniquity of man and the people are not warned, he will be guilty for the soul that perishes (*animae pereuntes*);" *Historiae* 5.18; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 276-77. Gregory then explained to his fellow bishops that if they did not call out King Chilperic for the sins he committed and afterwards the ruler should die, they would be guilty for allowing his soul's loss. The second speech involves Gregory's effort to mediate and bring an end to a murderous feud at Tours. Gregory depicted himself opening his address to the aggrieved parties by quoting Matthew 5:9, "*Beati pacifici*." After this he announced that the church would pay whatever compensation for the violence committed thus far that the offenders could not afford to pay. That way, "the soul of a man would not perish" (*anima viri non pereat*); *Historiae* 7.47. Indeed, in a subsequent chapter Gregory narrated how the principals in the feud ignored his advice. As a consequence, the initiator of the conflict, Sichar, did lose his soul; *Historiae* 9.19 *capitulum*, *De interitu Sichari*. Cf. Jones, "Gregory of Tours' Poetics," 21. Along with Saint Avitus's prophecy to Chlodomer, presently under review, several other passages in which it appears Gregory intended an otherworldly connotation by use of *perire* through direct discourse are: *Historiae* 5.18: Gregory at Pratextatus's trial again warning bishops that Chilperic might perish by God's wrath (*pereat ab ira eius*); *Historiae* 7.1: Saint Salvius telling God he feared he would perish (*peream*) if removed from heaven (an obvious reference to him fearing damnation); *Historiae* 8.30: King Guntram remarking that it would be better for a few who had acted blasphemously during a campaign to perish (*pereat*) than for many to incur God's anger (*ira Dei*).

anecdote with a poignant commentary about Chlodomer's misconduct and death, or a comparison of his and Sigismund's fates, Gregory simply continued his narration of events. He described how Chlodomer's brothers rallied and momentarily gained the Burgundian kingdom for themselves. He further related that Chlothar took his dead brother's widow for a wife, while Queen Clotild took charge of raising the dead king's three young sons.[127] Prior to this narration, Gregory announced the ruler's infernal fate in the *capitulum* for *Historiae* 3.6, *De interitu Chlodomeris*.[128] Having provided this assessment up front, the author expected readers to ponder the signs he laid out in the chapter's narrative and to reach the same conclusion he did: Chlodomer's soul "perished" because he ignored the holy abbot's prophecy. As for Sigismund's fate, in the last sentence of *Historiae* 3.5, Gregory remarked that, despite that king's lamentations and prayers, he would endure *ultio divina*. By use of that term one would think Gregory meant that that ruler also lost his soul, and so he would have had the full weight of God's vengeance come upon him in the form of a death blow. In the *GM*, however, Gregory elaborated on the retribution the Burgundian ruler incurred: "[Sigismund] performed penance and prayed that divine vengeance (*ultio divina*) would punish him in this world, so that he might be absolved in judgment if he repaid the evils he had committed [i. e., killing his son] before he departed from this world."[129] This passage informs how God accepted the repentant king's prayers.[130] After again mentioning in *GM* how Chlodomer arranged Sigismund's death, the author related that the latter's corpse was buried at the monastery at Agaune. There, frequent miracles proved Sigismund was admitted to the *consortium sanctorum*.[131] Gregory caused the examples of Chlodomer and

127 *Historiae* 3.6.

128 *Historiae* 3.6 *capitulum*.

129 *GM* 74; trans. by Van Dam, *Martyrs*, 97.

130 According to Anne-Marie Helvétius's recent reconstruction for the early development of Saint Sigismund's legend, Gregory's contribution had to fit with expectations of his era; Helvétius, "De l'assassinat," 56. King Sigismund may have actually been killed during a Burgundian rebellion; ibid., 44-51. Following the Frankish conquest of Burgundy in 534, the monks of Saint-Maurice reinvented their abbey's founder as a victim of the war who was forcibly tonsured and eventually killed; ibid., 52-55. Marius of Avenches retained a part of this tradition by reporting that Sigismund killed his son in 522. The next year the Burgundians surrendered the king to the Franks while he was dressed like a monk, and he was slain; Marius of Avenches, *Chronica* s. a. 522-523. Gregory discarded the image of Sigismund donning a habit, and instead depicted the king overcoming his crimes by doing penance and good works, including instituting the *laus perennis*; Helvétius, "De l'assassinat," 56.

131 See above, pp. 199-200 n. 180.

Sigismund's deaths to exemplify one of his most crucial lessons: it is better to undergo "punishment" in this world in the form of penance than to endure an eternal penalty in the next world. Although a part of Sigismund's divine reprimand still involved him dying, the king willingly undertook most of his suffering prior to his execution. Absolved of his sin, his death therefore became a martyrdom. Chlodomer, however, incurred the full brunt of a fatal form of divine vengeance; that sinful king, therefore, lost his life and soul simultaneously.

However, Abbot Avitus's prophecy had not simply warned about Chlodomer's fate, but that of his wife and children, too. About the king's widow, Guntheuca, the only mention of her Gregory provided is that she wedded her dead husband's libidinous brother, Chlothar.[132] As for Chlodomer's sons, we already know that one of the boys, Chlodovald, was granted a divine reprieve by eluding the clutches of his murderous uncles. The child took advantage of that opportunity by becoming a dedicated holy cleric and he merited sainthood. As for the other two, Theudovald and Gunthar, having been teased away from their grandmother by a pretense, they were brought before their uncles. Gregory did not spare the details in relating their demise. He wrote that Chlothar hurled the older brother onto the floor and punched a dagger under his arm thereby brutally vanquishing him.[133] As that child screamed while breathing his last, the younger brother grabbed the other uncle around the legs and cried for help. Childebert, who was without a son of his own, vacillated until Chlothar threatened his life, whereupon the king threw the boy to his brother. Chothar then viciously dispatched him with a dagger to the ribs. Gregory's title for the *capitulum* of the chapter relating these children's demises is *De interitu filiorum Chlodomeris*.[134] Providing no exposition whatsoever, our author simply expected readers to interpret the two boys' violent deaths in the light of their father's sinful rejection of Abbot Avitus's divine admonition, detailed twelve chapters previously. As per the holy man's warning, the children should endure what Chlodomer himself incurred, not only

132 Perhaps Gregory thought that arrangement amounted to hell enough for the queen! More seriously, because the bishop was strongly opposed to widows remarrying, he would have regarded Guntheuca's participation in a second nuptial in light of Saint Avitus's curse as a sign suggestive of an unhappy hereafter to come. Guntheuca apparently had no son with Chlothar, and presumably she was dead by 533 when that king placed the captured Thuringian princess Radegund, in a villa to await her becoming old enough to marry; *Historiae* 3.7; cf. Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 104-05.

133 *Historiae* 3.18.

134 *Historiae* 3.18 *capitulum*.

a brutal death but also perdition.[135] Few examples surpass this one in betraying the level of sedulity Gregory expected readers to apply as they gathered clues and interpreted signs associated with sin and death scattered throughout the corpus to comprehend the ultimate condition of certain deceased characters' souls. Likewise, few anecdotes compare with those about Chlodomer and his sons in demonstrating how deeply committed the bishop was to maintaining a consistent rationale when assessing the dire consequences that awaited people who failed to heed the warnings of God's saints and holy disciples.

A Mixed Bag: Kings Theuderic, Theudebald, Childebert I, Chlothar I and Prince Chramn

Of the remaining five Merovingian males who expired prior to Gregory becoming bishop, he only applied his telltale terminology for one.[136] The author expected readers to apply their sleuthing skills extra diligently to arrive at an understanding of their fates. The next Frankish king to expire in Gregory's pages after Chlodomer was the latter's older half-sibling, King Theuderic. One of that ruler's qualities which Gregory made readily apparent to his audience was military prowess.[137] Gregory further characterized Theuderic as a master of deception.[138] For example, in addition to depicting the king luring his brother Chlothar into a tent to assassinate him, unsuccessfully as it happened, the author also insinuated that Theuderic

135 Had Gregory wanted merely to express the boys' violent demise without intimating their damnation, he could have entitled the anecdote, *De interfectione Chlodomeris filiorum*, as he did for the chapter relating the murder of Bishop Praetextatus of Rouen, *De interfectione Praetextati episcopi*; *Historiae* 8.31 *capitulum*. Apparently, Gregory regarded the loss of life and soul in the same way he did physical suffering. Both could result from sins brought upon an individual through the exertions of another person, particularly a relative. Compare with *VSM* 2.24, where the writer readily ascribed a young beggar's deformed physique to his parents sinfully conceiving the child on the night before a Sunday. See also Gregory's comparison of the tribulations and fates of contemporary earthquake victims in Syria with biblical events involving Lot's household and Sodom; *Historiae* 10.24.

136 The years of death are Theuderic (533), Theudebald (555), Childebert (558), Chlothar (561) and Chramn (560). The list does not include Theudebert (548), whom we already have considered.

137 Gregory described Theuderic capably gathering Visigothic cities on his father Clovis's behalf in the aftermath of Vouillé; *Historiae* 2.37. Upon becoming a king Theuderic successfully fought alongside Hermanafrid of Thuringia versus the latter's brother; *Historiae* 3.4. He took the field with his half-brother Chlodomer during the nearly triumphant first campaign against Burgundy in 523; *Historiae* 3.6. He fought with Chlothar during the conquest of Hermanafrid's Thuringia; *Historiae* 3.7.

138 *Historiae* 3.7: *In talibus enim dolis Theudericus multum callidus erat.*

was responsible for causing Hermanafrid of Thuringia to fatally topple off a wall.[139] Gregory likely derived his overall impression of King Theuderic from paternal family members' remembrances of the king's vicious treatment of the Auvergne in the wake of Arcadius of Clermont's precipitous attempt to transfer the district to King Childebert I while Theuderic was fighting abroad. The latter retaliated by unleashing his soldiers upon the Auvergne around 524 and Gregory revisited episodes of the king's subordinates brutalizing the territory's churches time and again in his writings.[140] To show this was not an isolated behavior on Theuderic's part, Gregory also recounted how the ruler allowed his men to ruin the district of Verdun and abuse, dispossess, and exile its bishop.[141] On the positive side of the ledger, Gregory credited Theuderic with taking the initiative to elevate Saints Quintianus and Gallus as successive bishops of Clermont.[142] In the *VP* Gregory depicted Theuderic during his assault on Clermont's walls miraculously acquiescing to the answered prayers of the holy bishop Quintianus; however, the king only stopped the attack after he had been divinely caused to senselessly run about the streets of the city's suburbs.[143] Still, not only did Theuderic reverse his decision to demolish Clermont and exile Quintianus, he also decreed that no soldier could assail people or pillage within eight miles of the city. A deceased saint to whom Theuderic displayed similar deference during the incursion into the Auvergne was Julian. Gregory wrote that the king ordered the execution of soldiers who pillaged the possessions of poor people that had huddled in the martyr's basilica, and the ruler also

139 *Historiae* 3.7-8. Gregory additionally presented Theuderic resorting to cunning in order to eradicate a royal pretender named Munderic who had safely situated himself behind the stout walls of a fortress. The king resolved this dilemma by sending a retainer to swear a false oath on a church altar and guarantee the pretender's safety. When Munderic exited the fortress, the king ordered him slain forthwith; *Historiae* 3.14. On Munderic as a probable descendant of a Frankish king killed by King Clovis, perhaps Sigibert the Lame: Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity*, 109-110. For an argument that Gregory's several tales of the rise and fall of usurpers in the *Historiae* comport with a late ancient literary tradition: Pizarro, "Gregory of Tours," 361-73.

140 See pp. 37, 221 n. 85.

141 *Historiae* 3.34. Goffart, *Narrators*, 221, characterized Gregory's portrayal of Theuderic in the *Historiae*, like that of Chlodomer, as "uniformly dark." One of the king's actions that negatively impacted one of Gregory's maternal relatives involved a truce sworn between Theuderic and Childebert I that fell through, which resulted in the enslavement of Gregory of Langres' younger relation, Attalus, who eventually escaped his master; *Historiae* 3.15.

142 *Historiae* 3.2; *VP* 4.1, 6.3. Another bishop of Clermont whom Gregory identified as being appointed by Theuderic was Quintianus's predecessor, Apollinaris. Gregory did not like this prelate, about whom it was written that he acquired the see only after bribing the king, and even then, he held it for only four months before dying; *Historiae* 3.2.

143 *VP* 4.2.

established another eight-mile safe zone around the church.[144] Another facet of the king that Gregory likely appreciated was his relationship with Gallus. Theuderic reportedly summoned the latter while he was a young cleric at Clermont to join him at court.[145] When the king once brought Gallus along on a visit to Cologne and the zealous cleric took advantage of the occasion to burn down a pagan temple, Theuderic saved the churchman from an angry mob by mollifying them with a persuasive, and presumably intimidating, speech.[146] Another holy man whom Theuderic "revered with great honor" (*Venerabatur autem cum … magno honore*) was Bishop Nicetius of Trier. Gregory admitted that prior to the king presenting Trier's cathedra to Nicetius, the latter was the person to whom Theuderic confessed his sins "in order to improve himself through his reprimands."[147]

Given these varied details, one imagines Gregory may have been truly torn over ascertaining the bellicose monarch's true character. As he would do for several Merovingians appearing subsequently in his pages, the author provided his audience with two sides of the complicated king. But Gregory did not splice Theuderic's life into contrasting periods of early sinfulness and later piety as he did with Clotild during her widowhood, and with Theudebert. Perhaps it was by virtue of a rare inability to figure Theuderic out that Gregory not only gave no hint as to the location of the king's soul, he did not even provide a chapter in the *Historiae* entitled *De obitu Theuderici*. Instead, he buried mention of Theuderic's demise among the details of a chapter called *De interitu Sigivaldi*. Duke Sigivald was an individual whom Gregory wanted readers to acknowledge as one of the true villains active in the aftermath of Theuderic's march on the Auvergne. Earlier in *Historiae* 3 Gregory explained that when the king had departed the region, he left his relative Sigivald behind.[148] Thereafter, the duke proceeded to confiscate people's properties while allowing his murderous thugs to terrorize the populace.[149] The chapter relating

144 *VSJ* 13. Another holy person for whom Theuderic showed a deep respect was Abbot Portianus. When news broke at the king's camp that the abbot had miraculously revealed a snake hiding in a goblet of wine, Theuderic rushed forward and demanded that all of his war captives be liberated, even before the holy man had a chance to ask the ruler to do so; *VP* 5.2.

145 *VP* 6.2.

146 *VP* 6.2.

147 *VP* 17.1; trans. based on James, *Life*, 106.

148 *Historiae* 3.13.

149 One among the properties Sigivald seized was an estate belonging to Saint Julian's basilica. Not surprisingly, while the duke was inhabiting the villa he became deathly ill. His wife then followed a priest's advice and removed her moribund spouse off the property, after which Sigivald recovered his health and gratefully gave Julian's church double the worth for what he

Sigivald's death opens with a quick line simply stating that King Theuderic cut down his relation with a sword (*parentum suum occidit gladio*).[150] The writer offered no explanation as to why Theuderic decided to kill the man.[151] Otherwise, Gregory spent the remainder of the chapter mainly focusing on how Theudebert circumvented his father's command that he slay Sigivald's son, who at the time was on campaign with the prince in Provence.[152] Theudebert sent the young man into hiding, and the prince was still in the south when he learned that Theuderic had become gravely ill (*graviter egrotare*). Gregory tersely wrote: "While his son was still absent, Theuderic after not many days died (*obiit*) in his twenty-third year of rule."[153] By *obiit* the writer only reported the king's this-wordly expiration. Theuderic, it seems, was neither *valde malus* nor *valde bonus*, and apparently Gregory was incapable of determining what to make of his eternal fate. So effectively did he downplay mention of Theuderic's expiration in the chapter ostensibly about Sigivald's *interitus*, one can scarcely imagine

had taken; *Historiae* 3.16. Gregory repeated the story of Sigivald and Julian's villa at *VSJ* 14. In that account he specified how the duke's illness left him feverish, senseless, and bedridden. Gregory ended the tale in the *VSJ* with a mention of Sigivald's recovery, but he did not remark there about the money the duke gave to the basilica in gratitude for his restored heath as he did in the *Historiae*.

150 *Historiae* 3.23.

151 The title for *Historiae* 3.23, *De interitu Sigivaldi*, contradicts the seemingly happy ending given at *Historiae* 3.16 and *VSJ* 14, both of which indicate Julian's apparent satisfaction with the ducal couple. Regardless of what King Theuderic's motive was for killing Sigivald, Gregory may have suspected that Saint Julian was responsible for causing the duke's *interitus* after all. At *VSJ* 14, immediately after recording how the martyr rewarded Sigivald with his health and gave joy to the duke's wife by rescuing her husband, the author curiously passed along a rumor that a monk witnessed a vison of Saint Julian promising Saint Tetradius he would get back the villa for him. This is the same estate Sigivald had seized, which, as it happens, Tetradius, while he was alive, had bequeathed to the martyr's church. Gregory's next sentence only indicates how the monk's description of Julian matched that of Foedamia's earlier vision of the saint. The sentence does not relate how, or even whether, Julian fulfilled his pledge to the holy bishop to recover the property. It is plausible that Julian's remark to Tetradius refers to a situation after Sigivald's execution when the estate did revert back to Julian's church. This leads one to suspect that Gregory thought that although Julian awarded the duke with physical health in deference to his pious wife's sincere appeal to cure him of illness, the saint did not fully absolve Sigivald of his many sins, including keeping the estate. Several years after the duke's cure, Julian avenged the insult done to his church and Saint Tetradius through Theuderic's fatal sword-stroke. With that act the villainous Sigivald's soul "perished," and presumably the martyr's basilica reacquired its rightful property. It appears that *VSJ* 14 remains unfinished, like so much else in Gregory's corpus.

152 Gregory attributed Theudebert's reason for ignoring his father to a pious motive, because the prince had presented Sigivald's son for baptism.

153 *Historiae* 3.23: *Theudoricus non post multos dies obiit vicinsimo tertio regni sui anno.*

that he intended readers to contrast the demises and fates of the king and the damned duke.[154]

While uncertainty, or reservations, prevented Gregory from commenting on the hereafter condition of Theudebert's father, the author provided enough hints to intimate to readers the fate of Theudebert's son by Deuteria, Theudebald.[155] The *capitulum* for this young king's death reads *De obitu Theudovaldi*; Gregory did not remark on the ruler's fate in that title.[156] In the chapter's narrative, however, he briskly ticked off a list of facts about the king's actions and character. He first mentioned how Theudebald married a woman named Vuldetrada. By not explaining that Vuldetrada was a Lombard princess, Gregory deprived the king of a trait that he admired among other monarchs, that they marry other royalty instead of women from servile ranks.[157] Otherwise, he denounced Theudebald by indicating it was reputed he had a "wicked character" (*ferunt mali fuisse ingenii*).[158] Additionally, the author further slighted the young ruler by reporting how it was under his tenure that Narses slew Duke Buccelin and the whole of Italy fell from Frankish control into imperial hands.[159] Gregory closed out the chapter by elaborating on the year's prodigies, which included "grapes growing on an elder tree" and the appearance of "a fifth star, moving in the opposite direction, … seen to enter the circle of the moon."[160] The writer professed his belief that "these signs announced the king's death" (*haec signa mortem ipsius regis adnuntiasse*), after which he detailed Theudebald's demise, as follows: "He suffered an intense infirmity (*valde infirmatus*) and could not move from the waist downwards. He gradually became worse and died (*mortuus est*) in the seventh year of his reign."[161] Nowhere did Gregory

154 Had he meant for readers to make a comparsion he probably would have entitled the chapter *De obitu Theudorici et interitu Sigivaldi*. At the least he would have called attention to the king's death with a chapter entitled *De obitu Theudorici* placed adjacent to that on the duke perishing.

155 Gregory gave Theudebald the smallest amount of attention of all the contemporary Merovingian kings. Theudebald ruled for only seven years. Approximately five of those correspond with Gregory's first years as a cleric. It was to Theudebald's court that the avaricious archdeacon Cautinus traveled from Clermont in order to petition for that city's bishopric following Gallus' expiration. The fledgling monarch mustered his bishops at Metz and they confirmed Cautinus for the episcopal seat and consecrated him bishop; *Historiae* 4.7.

156 *Historiae* 4.9 *capitulum*.

157 Perhaps Gregory imagined his readers, particularly subjects of Austrasia, would already have been aware that not only was Vuldetrada a princess, she was the sister of his father Theudebert's former wife, Wisigard; Thorpe, *History*, 202 n. 9.

158 *Historiae* 4.9.

159 Loseby, "Gregory of Tours," 480.

160 *Historiae* 4.9; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 203.

161 *Historiae* 4.9; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 203.

allude to the young king acting piously or showing reverence to the poor, to God's churches, or any particular saint. To the bishop, therefore, Theudebald amounted to a failed secular non-entity. He expected readers to take away from the clues he provided in his quick rundown of the king's shortcomings that the portents of 555 not only presaged Theudebald's expiration, they announced the loss of this *malus ingenuus*'s soul.[162]

For his final remark about the hapless Theudebald, Gregory pointed out how Chlothar I took his kingdom and bedded his widow until bishops insisted he stop. Gregory gave considerable attention in his writings to the long-lived King Chlothar along with his brother Childebert I, much of which sheds an unfavorable light upon the pair. Gregory mixed the good with the bad regarding the two rulers, as he had done for Theuderic. While the writer presented Childebert primarily as a grasping figure, Chlothar comes across as more of a slave to his passions. Whereas Childebert was married to one wife with whom he had no sons, Chlothar wedded a succession of four women. By them and his consorts he had at least seven sons.[163] In addition to setting aside one wife for her sister, Chlothar also slept with his relatives' widows and married one. Another example of Chlothar acting zealously is the king's aforementioned extermination of Chlodomer's sons. While his brother Childebert folded before the pathetic pleas of one nephew to spare his life, Chlothar exhibited no such remorse and fiercely cut down one boy and then the next. Another of the ruler's impulsive deeds which Gregory divulged was demanding the murder of his wife Radegund's brother.[164] In addition to characterizing the king's order as an unjust act (*iniuste*), Gregory pointed out that the death happened after (*postea*) the couple's marriage in order to further stress the heinousness of the offense.

162 It appears that whenever Gregory associated portents with a single individual's death, especially irregular celestial phenomena, he interpreted them, like celestial aromas and fiery imagery at the sites of corpses, to be signs announcing a soul transferring to an otherworld. For example, he interpreted a large fiery ball (*globus ignis magnus*) crossing the sky and stopping over a church where the newly deceased Pelagia of Bourges had been laid to rest as a sign for Saint Martin welcoming the latest saint; *GM* 102. Specifically, the writer credited the church's energumens with associating the globe with Martin's *praesentia*. Van Dam, *Confessors*, 104 n. 113, has suggested this ball likely is identical with the brilliance (*fulgor*) that crossed the sky like a snake in 586, as reported at *Historiae* 8.42. Otherwise, among the portents Gregory recorded happening at the end of 584 were a large light (*pharus magus*) that crossed the sky, celestial rays (*in caelo et radii*), a fiery column (*columna ignea*) with a large star (*stella magna*) above it. Gregory declared that all of these events announced not the pretender Gundovald's mere death, but his "perishing" (*ut opinor, ipsius Gundovaldi interitum nuntiarunt*); *Historiae* 7.11. On portents involving royal deaths: de Nie, *Views*, 33-46.

163 *Historiae* 4.3. Gregory meant for Chlothar to represent a bad example for Merovingian marital policy; Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 88-91, 103-07.

164 *Historiae* 3.7.

About Childebert's covetousness, as has been addressed, Gregory detailed how that king answered the invitation of Arcadius in 524 in hopes of seizing the Auvergne for himself when it was rumored Theuderic had died.[165] Similarly, Childebert joined with Chlothar in 533, after Theuderic actually did expire, in a failed effort to grab his dead brother's realm before his nephew Theudebert could secure it.[166] Soon afterwards Childebert, who had no son, adopted Theudebert as his heir, and the duo set out to wage a war against Chlothar, but Queen Clotild and Saint Martin thwarted that conflict before it started.[167] The avaricious king did manage to seize part of his brother's share of the *solidi* King Theudat paid in recompense for Amalasuintha's murder and in return for not invading Italy.[168] Deprived of an heir after Theudebert's demise in 548, Childebert allied with Chlothar's son Chramn, who rebelled against his father. Around 555 and 556 Childebert encouraged the Saxons to rise up against Chlothar.[169] Then while Chramn was attempting to seize lands in Burgundy, Childebert pillaged and burned his way towards Reims, and when a rumor spread that Chlothar was dead, he snatched as much of his brother's territory as he could.[170] Chlothar, however, was still alive and apparently he quickly recouped all his lands upon his return west. Childebert's grasping designs only ended by virtue of his own expiration. His single lasting military success was the conquest of Burgundy in 534, which he accomplished in concert with Chlothar.[171] Childebert's expansionist endeavors paled in comparison to those of his pugnacious brother. In addition to winning eastern lands from the Thuringians, Chlothar incorporated the *regnum Theuderici*, including the territory of the Ripuarian Franks, into his own realm following Theudebald's demise in 555.[172] Upon Childebert's death in 558 Chlothar momentarily united all of Frankish Gaul under his dominion.

Another aspect of Childebert and Chlothar's actions that Gregory kept his eyes upon was their relations with the Church and churchmen. Canonical sources identify Childebert's involvement in at least three times as many councils as his brother, and Gregory himself reported that the former opened

165 *Historiae* 3.9.
166 *Historiae* 3.23.
167 *Historiae* 3.24, 3.28.
168 *Historiae* 3.31.
169 *Historiae* 4.16. See also Marius of Avenches, *Chronica* s. a. 556, 557.
170 *Historiae* 4.17.
171 *Historiae* 3.11. The two kings jointly invaded Spain in 541 but endured a sound defeat at Saragossa; *Historiae* 3.29.
172 *Historiae* 3.7, 4.9, 4.14.

the council of Orléans in 549.[173] Beyond councils, Gregory focused more on Childebert's regard for ecclesiastics. For example, he credited the ruler with possessing a great love (*magno amore dilegeretur*) for Bishop Sacerdos of Lyons and he depicted the king consenting to that prelate's wish that his nephew Nicetius, Gregory's great-uncle, succeed him on the episcopal seat.[174] In the *Miracula* Gregory detailed how Childebert once piously followed the advice of the aged recluse Eusicius of Bourges and distributed to the poor fifty gold coins he had tried to give to the hermit. After Childebert returned safely from a campaign in Spain which Eusicius predicted he would win, the king further honored this holy man by building a church to house his corpse.[175] Gregory revealed how Chlothar was capable of making similarly wise and pious gestures towards churchmen. For example, when that ruler assessed a tax on all churches in his realm and Bishop Injuriosus of Tours refused to comply and warned that God would deny the ruler his realm if he followed through on the scheme, the king rescinded his order out of fear Saint Martin would retaliate.[176] Another of Chlothar's wise decisions involved a priest from Clermont who appeared at court and declared how his own bishop had dispossessed him and tried to bury him alive. When the bishop – Cautinus, of course – arrived to protest the charges, Chlothar rightly ruled in favor of the wronged priest.[177] Another of Clothar's rulings our biased author would have appreciated was the king's judgment to reverse his prior decision to grant the cathedra at Tours to Cato of Clermont and give it instead to Eufronius, Gregory's mother's kin.[178]

After depicting how Kings Chlothar and Childebert exhibited the best and the worst of what Merovingian royals had to offer, Gregory presented the story of their decease in a three-chapter "death-spool" with a diptych

173 Chlothar: Orléans (533); Childebert: Orléans (533), Orléans (549); Paris (551/552). Based on the bishops in attendance, Childebert likely convoked Orléans (538) along with Theudebert; Halfond, *Archeology*, 105. One might suspect the same for Orléans (541). On Gregory's mention of Orléans (549): *VP* 6.5. King Childebert also kept abreast of the mid-sixth-century Three Chapters Schism through correspondence with popes; Wood, "Franks and Papal Theology." Gregory, however, made no mention in his corpus of the lasting threat to Christian unity. Also on the schism and Gaul: Stüber, "Fifth Council of Orléans."

174 *VP* 8.3.

175 *GC* 81.

176 *Historiae* 4.2.

177 *Historiae* 4.12.

178 In this chapter Gregory famously caused Chlothar to give the highest praise about Eufronius's (and Gregory's) family. The king declared: "That is one of the noblest and most distinguished families in the land… Let God's will be done, and that of Saint Martin. I order [Eufronius] to be elected"; *Historiae* 4.14; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 210-11.

in the middle, by which readers could contemplate four obituaries, each in relation to the others. The titles of the *capitula* for the chapters in question are *De obitu sancti Medardi episcopi*, *De obitu Childeberthi et interitu Chramni*, and *De obitu Chlothachari regis*.[179] According to the vocabulary deployed in the chapter headings, Gregory only announced the eternal fate of one of the four figures, Chlothar's rebellious son, Chramn; however, the author was more forthcoming in the narratives. He opened the chapter about Saint Medard by writing: "God's saint (*Dei sanctus*), bishop Medard consummated a lifetime of good works and died (*obiit*) full of days and famous for his holiness."[180] Although he opted for the merely this-worldly term *obiit* to record the bishop's actual death, Gregory expected readers to pick up his insinuation through the biblically based term *plenus dierum* that the *sanctus Dei*'s soul was saved, just as he had expected them to do the same when he used the phrase in reference to the deceased righteous *ancilla Dei*, Queen Clotild. After declaring Medard's sanctity Gregory credited King Chlothar for tending to the bishop's burial at Soissons and for beginning construction of a basilica over the bishop's blessed remains. Gregory opened the next chapter with a succinct report of Childebert's expiration: "King Childebert fell ill; for a long time he lay bed-ridden in Paris and then he died (*obiit*). He was buried in the church of Saint Vincent, which he himself had built."[181] As in the chapter's *capitulum*, so in the narrative Gregory used the non-committal term *obitus/obiit* to express the king's this-worldly demise. He may have intended the final mention of the ruler's burial in a basilica he himself commissioned as a hopeful sign, but did he think Childebert had repented sufficiently to overcome his many flaws? The fact that Gregory contrasted Childebert's mere death with Chramn's *interitus* in the *capitulum* suggests that Gregory expected readers to view the former in a more favorable light than the prince. But the curtness of Childebert's obituary reminds of the author's stealthy treatment of Theuderic's demise. Following the short mention of Childebert's burial Gregory advanced the narrative by reporting how Chlothar grabbed his brother's kingdom and treasury and exiled his widow and two daughters. Although Gregory's friend Fortunatus obviously felt comfortable in extending a consolatory estimation of Childebert's salvation in his sweet poem addressed to the king's widow, Ultrogotha, our author could not bring himself to pen the same conclusion. Not only did the evidence exhibited during Childebert's lifetime prove too variable

179 *Historiae* 4.19 *capitulum*, 4.20 *capitulum,* 4.21 *capitulum*.
180 *Historiae* 4.19; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 215.
181 *Historiae* 4.20; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 215.

for Gregory to acknowledge the ruler's afterlife condition, additionally, no meaningful sign manifested around the time of the king's death to help the writer realize the invisible truth about Childebert's fate. Such was not the case for Chlothar and Chramn.

As mentioned, in the *capitulum* for *Historiae* 4.20 Gregory announced the *interitus* of Prince Chramn. That prince certainly acquired Gregory's enduring animus for terrorizing the Auvergne around 555. But theologically the bishop regarded Chramn's greater sin to be his rebellion versus his own father.[182] This is the topic on which the author focused most in the chapter on Childebert and Chramn's deaths. Gregory narrated that following Childebert's decease, the prince met with Chlothar. The son then proved himself *infidelis* (Gregory did not specify how he did this) and he gathered his wife and two daughters and sought refuge with Count Chanao in Brittany. In the meantime, Saint Martin's basilica caught fire, and Chlothar commissioned a new tin roof and saw that the basilica was repaired to its previous elegance. Then, wrote Gregory, there arrived a report from the Auvergne that two battle lines of locusts traveled through that district and fought a contest wherein both were mostly wiped out (*maxime sunt conlisae*). This portent presaged the fight to come between Chlothar and Chramn, by which both would prove the losers. Gregory explained that on the night before the battle, Count Chanao tried to talk Chramn out of sinfully marching against his own father and proposed that the prince should let him ambush the king alone at night. Gregory confessed his belief that God's power (*virtute Dei*) caused the prince to reject this plan. In other words, the bishop imagined that God Himself determined Chramn was beyond the point of redemption, and so He intervened to bring the fiend to judgment.[183] Gregory commented that Chlothar's advance versus his son the next morning "resembled a new David against Absalom" (*tamquam novus David contra Absolonem*). The author revisited the biblical comparison through direct speech by reporting how Choltar requested that God pass the same judgment (*iudicium*) He once did in the fight between Absalom and David.[184] As was the way with Gregory's divinely determined battles,

182 Gregory provided a rare maxim at *Historiae* 6.43, that divine judgment would befall anyone who so much as thought about attacking or killing one's father, even if the latter was a heretic; *Historiae* 6.43. The author wrote this in reference to Prince Hermenegild, who was preparing for war against the Visigothic king, Leuvigild. The prince was captured during the effort and imprisoned. It was reported that in 585 Leuvigild had his son killed; *Historiae* 8.28.

183 Compare with God hardening pharaoh's heart at Exodus 7: 3-4.

184 *Historiae* 4.20. On the several examples of Gregory using biblical characters in similes: Hen, "Uses of the Bible," 277-78. Although David and Absalom seem a rather obvious example to draw

this one finished quickly. Chramn's ally, the Breton count, swiftly fell and the prince fled towards the coast to escape via ship. But he dallied while gathering his wife and daughters and was caught. King Chlothar ordered that a hovel in which the captive family was being held be burned down over them, "and so along with his wife and daughters [Chramn] perished (*cum uxore et filiabus interiit*)."[185] By the poignantly placed final word of the chapter, *interiit*, Gregory reinforced what the fiery spectacle symbolized and what the author had announced in the chapter's *capitulum*: the soul of the unfaithful and unrepentant prince "perished."

But did not the portentous locust-war indicate that Chlothar would also be a loser? To this point in the three-chapter spool, Chlothar was appearing like a saint-respecting and God-favored David. Likewise, in the first lines of *Historiae* 4.21, which narrates the king's demise, one first witnesses Chlothar making a pilgrimage to Tours and bringing gifts for Saint Martin. Gregory wrote that at Tours the king confessed his sins before the saint's tomb and prayed with much groaning (*cum grande gemitu*) for the confessor to beg God's pity for his misdeeds and gain His forgiveness. Following this very pious display the king reportedly went home, and while hunting he contracted a high fever and was taken to a villa and put in bed. Gregory continued: "There, while gravely vexed by this fever (*graviter vexaretur a febre*), the king declared: 'Well! What kind of king of heaven is it who kills such a great king in this way?' Placed in this tedious state, he exhaled his spirit (*spiritum exalavit*)."[186] Here again Gregory demonstrated the essential impulsiveness of Chlothar's character. Should one imagine that such an individual would have performed the aforementioned pious exertions with a truly contrite heart, or were they nothing more than products of sporadic impulse? Gregory next reported that the king's sons buried him in Saint Medard's basilica at Soissons. He then concluded the chapter as follows: "Furthermore, [the king] died (*obiit*) exactly one year to the day when Chramn had been killed."[187] As he did in regards to Childebert, Gregory left readers much to chew on regarding Chlothar's hereafter: bad habits, carefree murders, pious church building, a late appeal for Martin's *post mortem* intercession, and a dying tantrum vented directly towards the

upon in reference to a civil war between father and son, it is worth noting that Germanus of Paris's letter written to request that Queen Brunhild dissuade Sigibert from warring against his brother also cited how Absalom plotted to remove David from the throne and "perished" (*suscepit interitum*); *Epistulae Austrasicae* 9.

185 *Historiae* 4.20. The comparison with emperor Valens' *interitus* is obvious.

186 *Historiae* 4.21.

187 *Historiae* 4.21: *Obiit autem post unum decurrentes anni diem, quod Chramnus fuerat interfectus.*

Lord. What made the difference between ascertaining Childebert and Chlothar's fates was God's provision of signs: the divine arrangement of the king's departure on the anniversary of him murdering the hellbound prince was emblematic of the father's perdition. In the event one might think that portent insufficient, thirty chapters later Gregory noted how he himself saw lightning traverse the sky prior to Chlothar's death.[188] The writer expected readers to join him in reading these portents as messages from God enabling all to realize that Chlothar's spasms of devotion did not suffice to eradicate all of his hot-blooded sins; the fiery-tempered king lost his soul.[189]

Kings Charibert and Sigibert

The example of Chlothar's death reveals how Gregory put much stock in the details of events which transpired in the last moments of people's lives in order to ascertain their eternal fates.[190] The same consideration applies to the next two Merovingian kings who died after Chlothar. Gregory recounted that as soon as Chlothar's four sons buried him at Soissons, the youngest, Chilperic, grabbed his father's treasury and tried to secure support of the kingdom's magnates with its wealth. Chilperic entered Paris, but his three half-brothers, Guntram, Charibert and Sigibert, expelled him from the city and ended his bid for power. Afterwards the four divided Gaul into separate kingdoms.[191] The first of these monarchs to expire was Charibert, who ruled for only seven years.[192] Like his predecessor who governed from Paris, Childebert I, Charibert was actually respectful towards the bishops of his realm and cooperated with them to a notable degree in conciliar activity.[193] Fortunatus, who had settled in Charibert's Poitiers not long before the ruler's demise, penned a panegyric that extolled the king's faith above all

188 *Historiae* 4.51.

189 It is only in the last line of *Historiae* 4.21, when the specific day of Chlothar's death confirms his eternal damnation, that one is able to realize how Gregory's simile was not intended to mean Chlothar was like a *novus* David. The writer merely meant to liken Chlothar and Chramn's father-son battle with that of David versus Absalom.

190 Many examples from the *Miracula* in which the author only presented a wrongdoer performing a misdeed and then dying soon after at the hands of a vengeful saint confirm the same.

191 *Historiae* 4.21.

192 *Historiae* 4.22.

193 See Halfond, "Charibert I." Councils of the *regnum Chariberthi*: Paris (556/573), Saintes (561/567), Tours (567); Halfond, *Archeology*, 228-29. Halfond has identified the Council of Paris (556/573) as dating to the early years of Charibert's reign; idem, "Charibert I," 6-9.

other virtues.[194] Gregory, however, ignored whatever positive characteristics Charibert possessed; instead, he portrayed the king as a creature of *luxuria*. Most material about Charibert in the *Historiae* is concentrated in a single chapter which dwells on the king's prurient proclivities and then reports his death. Instead of it being titled *De obitu* (or *De interitu*) *Chariberthi*, it is called *De uxoribus Chariberthi*. Gregory detailed how Charibert abandoned his first wife, Ingoberga, after becoming desirous of a pair of the queen's slave girls, two sisters, despite the fact that both had taken to wearing religious clothes. Charibert discarded Ingoberga and married one of the siblings, Merofledis.[195] He also was having relations with a slave named Theudechidis. Eventually the king set aside Merofledis and married her sister, Marcovefa. This last act provoked the ire of Paris's bishop, Germanus, who regarded the union as incestuous.[196] Because the two refused to separate, the prelate excommunicated them, and both were still subject to that spiritual sanction when they died by late 567. About the duo's deaths Gregory wrote: "Since the king would not relinquish her, [Marcovefa] was struck by God's judgment and died (*percussa iudicio Dei obiit*); and soon after the king departed (*decessit*), too."[197] Interestingly, the writer here denoted explicitly how divine judgment befell the female excommunicant, and only indirectly did he associate the king with the same judgment. Regardless, he undoubtedly reasoned that both incurred particular judgment, since the suddenness of their divinely inspired deaths denied them any opportunity to seek absolution for their sin, which was not possible at any rate on account of their unrepentant posture.[198]

194 Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 6.2.

195 Charibert supposedly dismissed Ingoberga after she tried to disparage the two servants, thereby angering the king.

196 Greg Halfond has assessed how Germanus likely imposed excommunication on Charibert only after the king ignored the warnings of episcopal attendants at the Council of Tours in 567, which itself convened following the king's marriage; Halfond, "Contextualizing," 291-92; idem, "Charibert I," 25-28. Halfond, ibid., 26-27, attributes the sanction to Charibert's failure to heed canon 21, which reprimands virgins and widows who try to marry or remarry, and admonishes those who rape or marry them, and perhaps also canon 22, which forbids incestuous marriage; Council of Tours (567), canons 21-22; ed. de Clercq, *CCSL* 148A, 175-94. Gregory, however, never mentioned that Marcovefa had taken a vow to become a nun, only that she donned religious vestments (*religiosa veste habens*), and so, perhaps only the latter canon pertains to the obstinate royal duo. On incest in Gallic canons: Wood, "Incest, Law and the Bible." On the proper characterization of Marcovefa as a lay ascetic; Bailey, "Within and Without," 132. A similar individual who participated in the betwixt and between world of lay religious people that did not follow rules or take vows was the ascetic Monegundis, who was not a nun; ibid., 121-123; *contra* many, e. g., Jones, *Social Mobility*, 137.

197 *Historiae* 4.26; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 220.

198 Yet another of Charibert's wives drawn from the servile ranks was Theudechildis. After the king's death the latter made overtures to marry King Guntram. According to Gregory, the

Gregory had more to add about King Charibert's expiration in the *Miracula*. He opened a chapter in *VSM* 1 with a blanket criticism of the ruler: "King Charibert hated clerics, neglected the churches of God, and despised bishops."[199] Following this indictment the writer detailed how Charibert once took a property belonging to Saint Martin's church and stabled horses there. When these horses in turn went mad, scattered themselves about, and died various deaths, the royal horse-keepers reported this sign of God's anger to the king and begged him to restore the property to the confessor. No sooner did Charibert angrily express that the church would never possess the estate while he was king, the inevitable occurred. Gregory wrote: "immediately receiving a passage by divine order the king rested" (*protinus divina iussione transitum accipiens, requievit*).[200] *Quid infernum*? This wording constitutes the single most tortured reference to an individual's death in the entire of Gregory's corpus. The term *transitum*, usually connotative of salvation and here uncharacteristically attached to *accipiens*, is placed alongside the words *divina iussione*, comparable to the usual *divina ultione*, and followed up with *requievit*. Use of this verb to narrate an individual's death is unique to the corpus.[201] In no way would Gregory have related anything following the king's haughty remark other than that Charibert incurred divine vengeance or judgment. To my mind this passage must have been tampered with. What certainly added to our author's disdain for the debauched king's arrogant

monarch accepted the proposal. But when she came to him, Guntram pointed out the woman's unworthiness, seized her movables, all of which she would have acquired from his brother, and sent her off to a convent. Gregory pointed out how Theudechildis hated fasting and attending vigils. She offered to wed a Visigoth and relocate to Spain with what remained of her worldly goods, but the abbess found her out, beat her, and put under strict custody. There she endured much suffering until the "end of her present life" (*exitum vitae praesentis*); *Historiae* 4.26. Theudichildis reminds of others in the bishop's books who rejected a divinely provided opportunity to revel in a setting wherein one could concentrate on spiritual pursuits, people like Clovis's relatives, Chararic and his son. Rather than prepare her soul for salvation, the widow only thought to remarry and return to worldly ways. Gregory made of her an example of what a widow should not do following a husband's decease; Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 25-27. Furthermore, although he wrote of the queen's death as a "departure" from this life, he likely meant the term *exitus*, here as in other instances, to bespeak infernal anguish, which the woman's tormented condition prior to death also hinted she would experience upon death. On *exitus*, see pp. 253-54.

199 *VSM* 1.29; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 221.

200 *VSM* 1.29.

201 Gregory did employ the term *in requie*(*m*) four times, all in reference to saints. Saint Quirinus asked the Lord to place his soul with His martyrs *in requiae sempiterna*; *Historiae* 1.35. Saint Julian of Randau was taken into rest: *est adsumptus in requie*; *Historiae* 4.32. The prophetic Saint Hospicius twice announced that he was about to go *in requiem*; *Historiae* 6.6. For saints already "resting" in tombs: *Historiae* 1.33, 7.10. Furthermore, compare general statements including the word at *Historiae* 7.1: (*in requiem introire*), 10.31 (*in sinu Abrahae requiesceret*).

determination to hold on to Martin's estate is that the event happened during the episcopal tenure of Gregory's relative, Bishop Eufronius.[202] Not only did Charibert die an impenitent excommunicant, he expired after having offended Saint Martin and two holy bishops, Germanus of Paris and Eufronius of Tours.[203] At the request of Eufronius the villa eventually was given back to Martin's basilica by the man who next ruled over Tours, "the most glorious King Sigibert" (*gloriosissimo Sigiberto rege*), whose fate we will now consider.[204]

Sigibert is the fourth individual around whom Gregory early envisioned structuring the *Historiae* by narrating his death in the final chapter of *Historiae* 4 and calculating time from Creation in the computation of years located at the end of that book. In the 561 division of Chlothar's realm, Sigibert acquired the Austrasian sub-kingdom, what the author referred to as the *regnum Theuderici*, to which the Auvergne belonged.[205] Gregory credited Sigibert with piously completing construction of Saint Medard's basilica on his father's death.[206] But instead of focusing on the king's reverence for saints and churches, the writer impressed readers of *Historiae* 4 with Sigibert's military acumen.[207] For example, he described how Sigibert, just after ascending the throne, waged a successful campaign into Avar territory

202 In a separate book of the *Miracula* Gregory divulged a tale wherein Bishop Eufronius canceled a trip to visit Charibert in Paris upon miraculously realizing the king was dead; *GC* 19. The writer related that messengers from Paris "declared the king had passed" (*regem transisse nuntiant*) in the same hour that Eufronius made his announcement. Gregory probably applied *transisse* here to depict the messengers speaking respectfully of their own lord's decease. Nevertheless, because this is the second of only two instances in the corpus in which *transire* is used in reference to an unrighteous character, both regarding the same person, Charibert, it is possible that whoever changed the wording about the king's demise at *VSM* 1.29 also tweaked the mention of the ruler's death here as well.

Gregory likely acquired his opinions about Charibert from Eufronius; Halfond, "Charibert I," 4; idem, "Contextualizing," 290. In the *Historiae* Gregory related how Duke Guntram Boso believed that a woman who claimed the ability to prophesy predicted Charibert's death down to the day and hour; *Historiae* 5.16. While the bishop found the duke's trust in soothsayers foolish, he did not deny the veracity of this prediction. He did, however, regard the same woman's subsequent prediction that Guntram Boso would become the bishop of Tours and live to an old age to be laughable. Gregory contrasted this last prophecy with a dream he had in which an angel foretold the deaths of Chilperic and all of his sons. The bishop remarked that when his dream came to pass, he realized just how spurious soothsayers' prophecies were; *Historiae* 5.14.

203 Halfond, "Charibert I," 25, characterizes Eufronius and Germanus as longtime friends.

204 *VSM* 1.23.

205 *Historiae* 4.22.

206 *Historiae* 4.21. Fortunatus composed a poem for the basilica's dedication: Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 2.19; George, *Venantius Fortunatus*, 28.

207 Halfond, "Negotiating Episcopal Support," 3-5.

in retaliation for the latter invading his eastern lands.[208] The ruler returned victorious to Gaul to find that Chilperic had invaded his kingdom and had taken several cities. Sigibert responded by seizing his brother's capital, Soissons, after which he bested Chilperic in war and regained his territories. Gregory attested to Sigibert's clemency by explaining that after the king had captured Chilperic's son, Theudebert, he released the prince when the latter vowed never to oppose his uncle again. During a second contest against the Avars, in 566, Sigibert incurred a defeat and was captured.[209] Gregory attributed the king's loss to the enemy's use of necromancy, and he further undermined the reversal's significance by reporting how Sigibert afterwards bribed his way to freedom and then arranged a treaty with the Avar king which brought about a peace between the two peoples. Despite the setback on the field, here was the kind of warfare Gregory could countenance, given the peaceful outcome.[210] In 566 Sigibert also wedded the Visigothic princess Brunhild at his new capital city, Metz.[211] Marrying a fellow royal was another action of Sigibert's which Gregory thought befitting of a *gloriosissimus rex*. Less glorious was the bellicose Sigibert's decision, and attempt, to wrest Arles away from his older brother, Guntram. The latter managed to retain the city and seized Avignon from his aggressive sibling.[212] It was at the siege of Arles that many Auvergnians who had joined Count Firminus's force in hopes of acquiring easy spoils were swept away in the Rhone's rushing

208 *Historiae* 4.23.

209 *Historiae* 4.29.

210 Goffart, *Narrators*, 219-20, alternatively read the chapter on Sigibert's war with the Avars to imply how the author was opposed to all forms of warfare, preferring to end disputes peaceably instead.

211 *Historiae* 4.27. Gregory credited Sigibert along with unnamed bishops for convincing the Arian Brunhild to convert to Catholicism. The poet Fortunatus, newly arrived to Gaul in 566, composed Sigibert and Brunhild's *epithalamium*; Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 6.1. In that composition and another pertaining to the newlyweds, the poet mentioned a victorious campaign versus the Saxons and Thuringians that Gregory did not record, and he hailed Sigibert's prowess. Like Gregory, Fortunatus voiced support for the kind of warfare that secured peace: "Your wars have brought peace with a newfound prosperity, and your sword has given rise to dependable joys"; *Carmen* 6.1a.15-16; trans. by Roberts, *Poems*, 361. On the theme of peace in Fortunatus's panegyrics to Charibert and Chilperic: *Carmina* 6.2.37-44, 73-74, 9.1.63-66; Brennan, "Image of the Frankish Kings," 5, 7-8; Halfond, "War and Peace," 39. On Sigibert and Brunhild's wedding as a successful springboard for Fortunatus's subsequent career in Gaul: George, *Venantius Fortunatus*, 5, 27-28. Taking notice that the wedding poem is the only one in which Fortunatus included heavy interaction between historical and mythological figures, however, Roberts, *Humblest Sparrow*, 8-9, has questioned the success of Fortunatus's *epithalamium* and suggests the poet changed his strategy for praising addressees of later poems.

212 *Historiae* 4.30. Following the war Guntram restored Avignon to his brother.

waters. Here was the sort of martial conflict for which Gregory had no use; civil wars did not accomplish lasting peace and they temptingly lured numerous souls fixated on wealth to perdition. In 568 Sigibert acquired substantial districts in the aftermath of Charibert's demise, including those encompassing Tours and Poitiers.[213] Likely alarmed by that king's newfound territorial advantage, Chilperic quickly sent forces to occupy Tours and Poitiers.[214] He stationed his son, Prince Clovis, at Tours. Sigibert then allied with Guntram, whose general, Mummolus, took the cities back in 570 and restored them to Sigibert.[215]

For Gregory, Sigibert's eternal fate hinged on events that percolated in the year the bishop ascended the cathedra at Tours. In 573 Guntram and Sigibert quarreled over the latter's attempt to secure a bishopric within a territory for which one of Guntram's bishops had jurisdiction. According to the author, the king of Burgundy convened his bishops at Paris, but their appeals for peace went unheeded by both rulers. Rather than blame the war on a general sinfulness of the people, Gregory in this instance squarely attributed the conflict's escalation to the kings "making sins" (*peccatis facientibus*) by ignoring the bishops' pleas for peace.[216] Taking advantage of the divisiveness between his brothers, Chilperic sent his son Prince Theudebert to occupy Sigibert's cities along and south of the Loire, including Tours and Poitiers. As was described in Chapter 3, the prince subjected the Touraine to the first in a series of desolations.[217] Importantly, Gregory pointed out that by seizing Sigibert's cities, Theudebert broke the oath he had made in 561 that he would never harm his uncle. In 574 Sigibert summoned soldiers from beyond the Rhine to join him, while Chilperic allied with Guntram. Sigibert simply threatened the latter and caused him to stand down. Next he pursued Chilperic's force to the vicinity of Chartres, but the latter avoided a pitched battle against his bellicose brother by restoring all of the cities he

213 On the division of 568: Esders, "'Avenger of all Perjury,'" 24-27. As was addressed above, Sigibert respectfully restored to Bishop Eufronius of Tours an estate his predecessor Charibert had refused to return to Saint Martin's church; *GC* 19.

214 *Historiae* 4.45.

215 *Historiae* 4.45. Prince Clovis fled to Bordeaux after being forced out of Tours, and he only narrowly made it back to Neustria with his life; *Historiae* 4.47. On Sigibert's expansionist efforts in the first few years following Charibert's death: Halfond, "Negotiating Episcopal Support," 14-19.

216 *Hist* 4.47: *Sed ut bellum civili in maiore pernicitate crescerit, eos audire, peccatis facientibus, distulerunt*. Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 137, interpreted this and a similar passage at *Historiae* 4.51 to mean that it was the people's sins that started the war. For criticism: Shanzer, "Review Article," 254; Halsall, "Preface to Book V," 310 with n 61.

217 *Historiae* 4.47-48.

had taken. It was at this time that Sigibert's unruly forces utterly ravaged the districts around Paris, while the king occupied the city.[218] In the next to last chapter of *Historiae* 4, Gregory related that in 575 Chilperic again allied with Guntram and then the youngest brother marched, pillaged, and burned a swath through Sigibert's realm as far as Reims.[219] Sigibert again marshalled the troops from beyond the Rhine, and he sent two dukes to gather levies of men from Châteaudun and Tours to confront Prince Theudebert. About the prince Gregory wrote: "[Theudebert] was deserted by most of his troops but he made a stand with the few who remained. All the same he did not hesitate to engage the enemy. Battle was joined; Theudebert was vanquished on the field and killed (*evictus in campo prosternitur*); his dead body (*exanime corpus*), it is sad to say, was despoiled by his enemies."[220] As sad as it was for Gregory to relate Theudebert's death, the writer surely believed the prince's bitter end signified the loss of his soul, a punishment deservedly earned by virtue of his horrid treatment of the Touraine, which Gregory likened to Diocletian's persecution. But the main reason why Gregory probably felt certain Theudebert was damned is that the prince's death was the result of divine judgment imparted as a consequence of him battling against Sigibert after taking an oath fourteen years earlier that he would never oppose his uncle.[221] In the account of Theudebert's demise, however, Gregory offered nothing but words expressive of a this-worldly death on the battlefield.[222] The author ended the chapter by reporting how the prince's corpse was prepared for burial and taken to Angoulême. In the meantime, Chilperic secured the remainder of his family inside the fortress at Tournai.

Gregory entitled the final chapter of *Historiae* 4 *De obitu Sigiberthi regis*. He opened the narrative with an ominous portent: "In that year lightning was observed to dash about the sky, just as we saw it before Chlothar's death."[223] At Paris those among Chilperic's soldiers who had formerly been under Charibert's command offered to switch their allegiance to Sigibert. Bolstered by this further advantage, the militant king now planned to assail his brother at Tournai. It was at this point,

218 *Historiae* 4.49. See also *VSM* 2.5-7.

219 *Historiae* 4.50.

220 *Historiae* 4.50; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 247.

221 Theudebert's oath: *Historiae* 4.23. Gregory left it for readers to assemble these clues and reach a conclusion that the prince's demise was divinely meted. One wonders what saint Theudebert may have offended by making the promise on his relics and then breaking it.

222 But Gregory communicated Theudebert's condemnation at the end of *Historiae* 4.51. See below, pp. 253-54 with n. 229.

223 *Historiae* 4.51; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 247.

according to Gregory, that Bishop Germanus of Paris confronted the ruler. The author caused the bishop prophetically to declare: "If you set out with no intention of killing your brother, you will return alive and victorious. But if you have any other plans in mind, you will die (*morieris*). For the Lord has said through Solomon: 'He who digs a pit for his brother will fall therein.' But that [king], making sins (*peccatis facientibus*), neglected to listen."[224] Next Gregory reported how Sigibert advanced to Vitry and after being raised on a shield and acknowledged king by his new subjects, two men stabbed him with poisoned knives: "Shouting and collapsing, after a small space of time [the king] sent out his spirit (*emisit spiritum*)."[225]

Gregory must have imagined how the circumstances surrounding Sigibert's death mirrored those for Chlodomer, and he likely expected his readers to recognize the parallel as well. Bishop Germanus's biblically-based prophetic warning to Sigibert that he would "fall into his own pit" if he tried to eliminate his brother closely resembled Abbot Avitus of Micy ominously foretelling how Chlodomer and his family would undergo whatever he did to King Sigismund's family. Neither king heeded the peaceable advice of his respective holy man, and each incurred a violent death thereafter. But whereas Gregory announced Chlodomer's loss of soul by deploying the term *De interitu* in the *capitulum* for the tale about his death, he merely used *De obitu* in the chapter heading on Sigibert's demise. The author instead followed the course he had taken when disclosing Chlothar's fate, by intimating the monarch's hereafter situation through details given in the narrative of the chapter about his expiration. First, Gregory associated Sigibert with his eternally condemned father by relating how the deaths of both men were presaged by the same kind of portent, lightning strikes. Second, Gregory deployed Proverbs 26:27 coming from the mouth of a respected holy man to convey how fratricide violated biblical sanction and any who committed it would bring down a divine form of poetic justice upon himself. Third, Gregory remarked that by ignoring Bishop Germanus, Sigibert was *peccata faciens*, this after the author had already characterized the same king as "making sins" four chapters previous when he and Guntram in 573 disregarded the advice of an episcopal synod to keep the peace. King Sigibert's

224 *Historiae* 4.51; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 247-48. Gregory otherwise referenced Proverbs 26: 27 in regard to the demise of obvious "villains"; *Historiae* 2.40 (Chloderic), 5.49 (Leudast), 9.9 (Rauching and conspirators against Childebert II).
225 *Historiae* 4.51.

soul, therefore, had been amassing sins atop of sins in the years and days leading up to his death.[226]

As in the *capitulum* for *Historiae* 4.51, which contained the term *De obitu*, Gregory did not utilize a word suggestive of divine anger or damnation in the chapter's narrative. He recorded the ruler's demise with the non-committal term, *emisit spiritum*. The author then proceeded with his narrative of events, following up the report on the monarch's this-worldly demise with details of violent ends met by three of his royal officials.[227] Gregory next related how Chilperic exited Tournai with his family and had Sigibert's corpse prepared for burial; the body eventually was carried to Saint Medard's and interred alongside his father's. But then Gregory offered the following:

> [Sigibert] died (*Obiit*) in the fourteenth year of his reign, when he was forty years old. Therefore, from the passing (*transitu*) of the elder Theudebert to the departure (*exitum*) of Sigibert are counted 29 years. Furthermore, between [Sigibert's] departure (*exitum*) and that of his nephew Theudebert were eighteen days. With Sigibert dead (*Mortuo*) his son Childebert ruled for him.[228]

In this abbreviated computation of years, the writer contrasted the great king Theudebert's *transitus* (i. e., "passing" to heaven) with Sigibert's *exitus*. *Exitus* is a word less frequently employed by Gregory than *interitus/interire*. But as with the latter term, judging by the nearly consistent application of *exitus* to the deaths of obviously villainous individuals, the writer apparently intended it to similarly communicate his estimation of a soul's condemnation.[229] It seems Gregory meant the word to convey about Sigibert what he

226 Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 137-38, misread two mentions of *peccatis facientibus* at *Historiae* 4.47 and 4.51 as referring to the people's sins instead of coming from the individual kings, Sigibert and Guntram. This in turn led the scholar to conclude that Sigibert becomes "a metaphor for the divine punishment corresponding to the general moral decline"; ibid., 138. Gregory's Sigibert was not a metaphor for the people at large, nor was any other king. For Gregory's belief that there was no moral decline, see, e. g., Goffart, *Narrators*, 208-09.

227 Sigila the Goth was subsequently tortured to death by Chilperic. Charegisel the *cubicularius* died alongside Sigibert. Gregory decided to point out Charegisel's faults, which included superficiality, greed for others' properties, and low social origin. The writer even revisited the *cubicularius*'s demise with the addition of a personification of Death: "the departure from life (*exitus vitae*) for this man was such that Death threatened so as to not permit him accomplishing his own will, he who often had threatened others' wills"; *Historiae* 4.51.

228 *Historiae* 4.51.

229 Gregory used *exitus* in reference to the actual deaths of thirteen obvious villains. The rogue's gallery to whom he applied the term includes: *Historiae* 2.34 (Gundobad, heretic king), 3.36 (Parthenius, tax-collector), 4.3 (Chramn, *malus* prince), 4.26 (Theudechildis, *indigna* queen),

anticipated his diligent readers would conclude about the king's fate after piecing together the clues he provided in the chapter: portentous lightning, Germanus's prophetic threat, a biblical citation forbidding fratricide, the king's accumulation of sins. All signs indicated that Sigibert's soul was lost.[230] Finally, Gregory closed out *Historiae* 4 with the structurally significant computation of years from Creation to Sigibert's demise. The last part of the passage reads: *A transitu sancti Martini usque ad transitum Chlodovechi*

4.51 (Charegisel, Sigibert's chamberlain), 4.51 (Prince Theudebert), 5.5 (murderer of Gregory's brother), 5.5 (victim of a duel with the former), 5.5 (Pappolus of Langres, wicked bishop), *VSM* 1.21 (thief); *VSJ* 13 (wicked soldiers), 14 (Duke Sigivald); *VP* 8.7 (murderer). The writer one time wrote that an Austrasian envoy told an emperor about his "colleagues' deaths" (*exitum sociorum*). This referred to two other envoys whom a mob had cut down without cause; *Historiae* 10.2. The meaning Gregory wished *exitus* to convey in this last case is similar to what the author intended for those instances when he used the term in direct discourse and in reference to people who did not actually die. These individuals were either near death or were experiencing physical anguish to the point of death. Interestingly, none from these latter cases is a villain; *Historiae* 5.15; *VSM* 2.4, 2.18, 2.43, 4.7; *GM* 82.

Like *transire* and *mirgare*, *exitus* could imply a soul's movement elsewhere, a departure, as when Gregory twice referenced an "exit of present life" (*vitae praesentis exitum*); *Historiae* 1.10, 4.26. But compare this with a use of *exitus* in a chapter pertaining to a debate about bodily resurrection where the writer presented himself commenting about Christ's harrowing of hell. The bishop declared: "For descending to hell, as [Christ] bathed the shadows with a new light, He led the souls of those with him out (of hell), lest they suffer any further from this anguish (*ne hoc exitu amplius cruciarentur*)"; *Historiae* 10.13. It is this infernal anguish, I suggest, that Gregory meant to imply individuals experiencing upon their "departure" when he deployed *exitus* in reference to those who actually died.

Gregory's selection of this term did not come from him reading Jerome's chronicle. The latter's single use of *exitus* in reference to a death pertains to Saint Paul of Thebes, about whom the patriarch wrote a *vita*; Jerome, *Chronicon* s. a. 356; ed. Helm 322 b. Jerome otherwise used the term one time about the demise of 30,000 Jews trying to exit (*in exitu*) Jerusalem's gates during Passover; *Chronicon* s. a. 47; ed. Helm, 262 e. Much closer to Gregory's use of *exitus* for the demise of wicked individuals are several mentions of the term by Orosius. Examples include, e. g., the end of the Sodomites and Gomorrans; the fiery death of Hasdrubal's wife; and the death of Mithridates, who had his own throat cut after he was poisoned; Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos* 1.6, 4.23, 6.5, 7.6. Orosius employed the term fifteen times total in his history; see also 2.3, 2.4, 3.13, 4.1, 5.10, 6.2, 6.15, 7.27, 7.37, 7.43 (x 2).

230 Among scholars who have attributed Sigibert's death to divine punishment without considering the potential eternal consequence: Reydellet, *La royauté*, 371-72; Halfond, "Negotiating Episcopal Support," 2-4; de Nie, *Views*, 34-36, who interpreted the *fulgor* that crossed the sky and portended the king's death to be a comet, not lightning. Martin Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 138 n. 94, did contemplate what Gregory meant to convey about Sigibert's fate, writing: "The use of the term 'obitus' to describe Sigibert's death shows that Gregory, who explained this end as the result of Sigibert's guilty behaviour, did not view it as an unconditional condemnation of the king…" This reasoning, however, does not take account that in order to appreciate the fates of some kings, plus other individuals depicted dying in the *Historiae*, Gregory expected readers to do much more than simply consult the *capitula*.

regis anni 112. *A transitu Chlodovechi regis usque ad transitum Theodoberthi anni* 37. *A transitu Theodoberthi usque ad exitum Sigyberthi anni* 29. *Quod sunt simul anni* 5774 *tantum*.[231] Here the writer methodically laid out time for his readers according to the heavenly "passages" of Saint Martin, King Clovis, and King Theudebert, and the contrastingly infernal "anguished departure" of King Sigibert. Therefore, it was not only the numerable *strages gentium* during the civil war of the mid-570s and Sigibert's assassination that compelled Gregory to start composing a history. Rather, it was that and also his realization of the *gloriosissimus rex*'s damnation which prompted him to write a series of books that would serve to convince leading figures of society to repent by parading before the audience a series of instructive memorials of righteous and villainous actors whose souls would be saved and damned in accordance with their deeds, their characters, and potentially their last this-worldly actions.[232]

Kings Chilperic and Guntram

In the years between Sigibert's *exitus* and the bishop's own decease, only two more reigning Merovingian kings would expire, Chilperic in 584 and Guntram in 592. Maybe by the time Gregory decided he would chronicle events that happened after the sad business of late 575, he had witnessed so much of what he deemed to be foolishness and wickedness perpetrated by the man who inherited control over Tours following Sigibert's death, he relished the opportunity to instruct future kings through an additional negative example.[233] Martin Heinzelmann has elucidated how Gregory organ-

231 *Historiae* 4.51.

232 Compare Halsall, "Preface to Book V," 311: "The events of 574-6, and especially Sigibert's murder, were clearly those that prompted Gregory to begin his work." As Halsall has argued, it is possible that *Historiae* 5 prologue figured at the beginning stage of him composing the *Historiae*; ibid., 311-315. Because its lesson is compatible with that to be derived from Sigibert's perishing, perhaps the author originally envisioned the prologue serving as the work's conclusion. Wynn, "Wars and Warriors," 1, characterized it as "more epilogue than prologue." If Gregory initially did envision the prologue as an ending, then it seems most likely that the person to whom he first would have expected giving the text, the single king whom he addressed directly in the prologue, would have been Chilperic; cf. Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 43. Moving beyond that speculative scenario, from 585 to the moment of his own death, Gregory's target royal audience undoubtedly was Childebert II and his sons; see below, pp. 285, 290-91.

233 Reydellet surmised that Gregory forged "une monster d'un prince"; Reydellet, *La royauté*, 416-20, with quote at 419. And yet he realized there was an active, even capable, ruler behind the product of Gregory's vitriol; ibid., 419. Similarly, see James, *The Franks*, 165-68. Among recent contributions which distinguish between Gregory's Chilperic, *Nero nostri temporis et Herodis*,

ized *Historiae* 5 and 6 around the theme of "the prophet versus the godless king," with Gregory playing the prophet.[234] Whatever the merits of that idea, the writer did present himself several times challenging Chilperic's royal authority in those books. For example, the bishop defied Chilperic's demand to expel the king's son, Prince Merovech, from sanctuary at Saint Martin's basilica in 576 and 577.[235] At the trial of Bishop Praetextatus of Rouen in 577, Gregory presented himself standing alone in defense of the prelate who had presided over the nuptials of Chilperic's rebellious son to Queen Brunhild.[236] Our author presented himself at this trial explaining to fellow bishops that by proposing to level a harsh punishment against Praetextatus, King Chilperic was jeopardizing his own soul.[237] He additionally depicted himself quarrelling with Chilperic over how to handle Praetextatus after the latter confessed his guilt. The bishop spoke thusly: "You have the law and the canons. You must study them diligently. If you do not carry out what they say, you will soon come to realize that the judgment of God (*Dei iudicium*) hangs over your head."[238] Gregory's use of the term *iudicium Dei* here is one of several instances in which the writer teased readers of *Historiae* 5 and 6 with intimations of a pronouncement for Chilperic's fate soon to come.[239]

and a king who actually patronized certain ecclesiastics and saints' cults just like his brothers did: Armand, *Chilpéric Ier*; and especially, Halfond, "*Sis Quoque Catholicis*."

234 Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 41-51.

235 *Historiae* 5.14.

236 Halfond, "Negotiating Episcopal Support," 24, conjectures that Praetextatus may have opened his city to Sigibert's army in 575. On Praetextatus's trial and murder: Gradowicz-Pancer, "Femmes royales"; Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 121-25. For an analysis of *Historiae* 5.18 focused on Gregory's use of scenic representation: Keely, "Early Medieval Narrative," 134-39.

237 Gregory reported himself to say: "You must speak out and parade his sins before the King's eyes, lest some calamity occur, in which case you will be responsible for his soul"; *Historiae* 5.18; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 277. The writer further detailed how he reminded the prelates about the examples of Chlodomer's fate following that king's mistreatment of Sigismund, and Emperor Maximus, who incurred God's judgment (*iudicio*) and suffered a terrible death (*morte pessima condemnatus est*) after causing Saint Martin to live with a murderer. The scene of Gregory addressing bishops at Praetextatus's trial represents a microcosmic example of what the writer was attempting to accomplish in the *Historiae*. Just as Gregory as character stressed how it was incumbent upon ecclesiastics to instruct kings to repent and lead moral lives to save their souls, so did he as author of the *Historiae* instruct by giving examples of how certain kings merited particular afterlife destinations according to their moral and immoral conduct; cf. Mitchell, "Saints and Public Christianity," 86.

238 *Historiae* 5.18; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 278. On Gregory revealing through his argument with Chilperic the difference between the two men's sense of justice, the king's a malleable justice based on the consent of parties, the bishop's an unbending truth, in essence divine justice: Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity*, 41-43.

239 At the conclusion of Praetextatus's trial, Chilperic in the end did not pursue the prelate's execution, but instead caused him to be exiled. Following Chilperic's assassination, Praetextatus

In *Historiae* 6 Gregory detailed how the Neustrian ruler formed an alliance with the Austrasian kingdom in 581 and initiated a civil war against his brother Guntram.[240] The author depicted himself on one occasion around this time in the king's company at the royal manor of Nogent.[241] There Chilperic showed him a massive golden salver covered with gems along with a collection of golden medallions sent from the Byzantine emperor Tiberius. The writer's intent for this scene was to impress upon his audience how Chilperic cared only for worldly glory, unlike Tiberius, who, Gregory elsewhere assured readers, was a *magnus et verus christianus*.[242] Among Gregory's many portrayals and mentions of Chilperic which were designed to build up an impression of the king as prone to vice, one instance involved a playful allusion to the hereafter. In the aftermath of the civil war between Chilperic and Guntram, a letter surfaced at the trial of Bishop Charterius of Périgeux, whose diocese had passed from the Burgundian kingdom to the Neustrian realm. The epistle contained disparaging remarks about the prelate's new ruler. Among these criticisms Charterius reportedly quipped that having his diocese reassigned from Guntram's realm to Chilperic's was like falling out of paradise into hell (*a paradiso ad inferos*): funny and foretelling.[243]

Gregory afforded King Chilperic the dubious distinction of having two books of the *Historiae* end with chapters devoted to his hereafter; one detailed an ominous premonition and the other announced the deed done. First, after having covered his own trial in 580 and that proceeding's aftermath, including the bishop's return to Tours while Leudast was on the lamb, Gregory concluded *Historiae* 5 with an anecdote he claimed he had meant to mention earlier.[244] Upon the trial's conclusion Gregory had a conversation

was restored to his see, after which, he was stabbed to death in his own cathedral; *Historiae* 8.31. On his murder, see below, p. 279. Gregory presented himself acting more respectfully towards Chilperic when the latter presided over his trial at Berny in 580. Gregory even managed to muster up a compliment for the king by pointing out how Chilperic showed wisdom and moderation by allowing the gathered prelates to consider options besides calling witnesses to testify against the bishop; *Historiae* 5.49. For Gregory's more favorable depictions of Chilperic: Wood, "Secret Histories," 254-55; Halsall, "Nero and Herod?" 342-44.

240 *Historiae* 6.1.

241 *Historiae* 6.2. On the distinct possibility Gregory was involved in negotiating the 581 alliance between Chilperic and Childebert at Nogent: Wood, *Gregory of Tours*, 17-18, 54.

242 Tiberius: *Historiae* 5.19; Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 49. Heinzelmann, ibid., 49 n. 25, points out how Gregory further expected readers to contrast how Tiberius frequented holy places instead of circuses, while Chilperic threw circus games at Soissons and Paris; *Historiae* 5.17.

243 *Historiae* 6.22. As it turned out the letter proved to be a forgery and Charterius's case was dismissed.

244 *Historiae* 5.49-50.

with Bishop Salvius of Albi outside the royal manor at Berny. The visionary directed Gregory's attention to something he espied over the manor's roof. Gregory could not see it, so the spiritually worthy Salvius explained: "I see the unsheathed sword of divine wrath (*irae divinae gladium*) suspended over this house."[245] The writer noted that this premonition happened twenty-two days before Chilperic's two young sons expired. But Salvius's vision need not have referred only to the deaths of the princes. For earlier in *Historiae* 5 Gregory had related his own vision pertaining to the Neustrian house. The bishop explained that an angel flew over Martin's basilica and proclaimed to him that God had stricken (*pecussit*) Chilperic and all of his sons.[246] Judging by these two signs of divine wrath, Chilperic and his sons' fates were in grave peril.[247] Not surprisingly, Gregory entitled the final chapter of *Historiae* 6,

245 *Historiae* 5.50; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 323.

246 *Historiae* 5.14. Gregory situated this story directly after the tale about Guntram Boso heeding the prediction of a seer that Merovech would become king and the duke would become the bishop of Tours. His intention was to contrast the truth of divine revelation with the falsehoods of fortunetellers. According to the author, the vision happened while four of Chilperic's sons were alive. For Gregory's math to work, the angel will have had to visit between the deaths of Samson and Clovis in 577, bearing in mind that Gregory recounted Samson's death after this account, at *Historiae* 5.22. The living sons at that time were Merovech, Clovis, Chlodobert, and Dagobert. Theudebert was already dead, as was Samson apparently, and Theuderic had yet to be born. Alexander Murray has established that the prophecy discounted the son born to Fredegund in 584, Chlothar, as illegitimate, meaning that Gregory figured the prediction was fulfilled with Chilperic's death in 584; Murray, "Chronology," 168-72.

247 So what did Gregory imagine about the fates of Chilperic's sons? The writer certainly discerned that the souls of the three adult princes were lost. On Theudebert, see above, p. 251. On Merovech and Prince Clovis, the writer noted the former's *interitus* three times, and Clovis's *interitus* a record six times. Gregory's thoughts on Chilperic's four sons through Fredegund, who all died young, are less clear. The bishop announced the death of the couple's first son, Samson, with the term *De obitu* and narrated that he died not five years after the newborn's baptism; *Historiae* 5.22. Judging by the placement in the chapter, Samson only lived around two years. Did Gregory think that was sufficient time for a young child to accumulate sin and nullify the grace of baptism? Or did he rationalize that expiatory efforts did not matter if the family was cursed?

The *capitulum* for the deaths of the couple's sons Chlodobert and Dagobert in 580 is entitled *De desenteriae morbo et filiis Chilperici mortuis*. In the narrative Gregory related that the king had the younger son baptized after he incurred the disease. The child died at Berny and was buried at Saint-Dionysius in Paris. The older boy, Chlodobert, lingered and was carried to Saint Medard's at Soissons where he expired. He was buried at the basilica of Saints Crispin and Crispinian; *Historiae* 5.34. Fortunatus penned a consolatory poem for Chilperic and Fredegund in the wake of these two boys' deaths, encouraging them to give thanks rather than grieve, since both brothers were in heaven. The poet likewise composed epitaphs for Dagobert and Chlodobert in which he assured that the children were already living in glory; Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmina*, 9.2-4. Gregory, however, did not use language suggestive of the two boys' salvation, or damnation,

De interitu Chiperici regis.[248] In keeping with the *capitulum*'s announcement of the king's soul "perishing," the first sentence of the narrative famously referred to Chilperic as "the Nero and Herod of our time."[249] By equating the Neutrian ruler with this pair of archetypal *inimici ecclesiae*, Gregory assured readers that just as Chilperic surely committed a litany of sins against God's churches and ministers, so must he, like Nero and Herod, face eternal consequences for his actions.[250] The writer next recounted that while Chilperic was hunting near a royal manor, an assassin came upon the king and stabbed him twice. He concluded: "Immediately a copious quantity of blood gushed forth, as much from [Chilperic's] mouth as from his open wound, and so his wicked spirit (*iniquum spiritum*) drained out."[251]

Chilperic is the one Merovingian king whom scholars have frequently recognized as being assigned an infernal fate by the author.[252] Contributing

when recounting their deaths. Instead, at *Historiae* 5.34 he depicted Fredegund grieving over her loss, while at the same time ironically implicating her own infernal fate; see below, pp. 280-81.

About the couple's infant prince, Theuderic, Gregory wrote that Bishop Ragnemod baptized him while Chilperic was at Paris; *Historiae* 6.27. But when Chilperic entered that city to baptize Theuderic on Easter 583, the king made sure to parade relics before him in order to counter the curse that had been put in place preventing either Sigibert, Chilperic, or Guntram from entering the city without the others' permission; *Historiae* 6.27, 7.6. In a chapter entitled *De obitu filii Chilperici, quem Theodoricum vocavit*, the author related that Theuderic, scarcely a year old, contracted dysentery and died (*spiritum exalavit*), after which he was taken to Paris for burial; *Historiae* 6.34. In this case Gregory pointed out that a fiery ball in the sky portended the infant's death. Gregory earlier had written about this fireball that it appeared on the last day of January, a Sunday, and was visible to people at Tours; *Historiae* 6.25. Cf. de Nie, *Views*, 40-41.

With Gregory already convinced that Theudebert, Merovech and Clovis were condemned, my suspicion is that the author further suspected Chlodobert, Dagobert, and Theuderic also incurred an eternal penalty as a result of the *divina percussio* God levelled on all the king's sons, as the angel had predicted to him; *Historiae* 5.14. Unlike Prince Theudebert, who died before the angelic vision but earned perdition according his own merits, Samson, if in fact he died before the vision as per Gregory's math, and since his death was not heralded by a celestial portent as Theuderic's was, may have eluded the curse.

248 *Historiae* 6.46 *capitulum*.

249 *Hist* 6.46; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 379.

250 Gregory recounted many prodigies happening in Gaul in 584, including roses blooming in January and a rainbow-like image encircling the sun. The grape harvest was decimated by a frost, followed by a tempest and then a hailstorm. Apple trees produced fruits in July and again in September, and livestock were wiped out by repeated diseases; *Historiae* 6.44. But none of these did the author directly attribute as portents of Chilperic's assassination, which he described two chapters later. On the prodigies of 594: de Nie, *Views*, 43-46.

251 *Hist* 6.46.

252 Carozzi, *Le Voyage de l'Âme*, 65; Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity*, 43; Breukelaar, *Historiography*, 237; De Nie, *Views*, 285-87, especially at 286, where she interpreted Gregory's dream to mean that Chilperic "is a bishop of the devil's antichurch"; Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*,

to this common acknowledgement is a famous scene at *Historiae* 8.5, wherein Gregory depicted himself conversing with King Guntram during a banquet with many bishops at Orléans in 585.[253] Guntram had been complaining about Bishop Theodore of Marseilles, whom the ruler suspected having played some part in Chilperic's assassination the previous year.[254] Gregory countered that the king's death was the fault of his own wicked behavior, and even Guntram's own prayers, since the two had been at war. The prelate then divulged to the king how he once dreamed that Chilperic was tonsured like a bishop and was being carried in a procession while sitting on a throne draped in black mourning cloth.[255] Not to be outdone, Guntram related his own dream in which three saintly bishops debated what should become of Chilperic. Eventually the trio broke Chilperic's limbs apart, stuffed him into a fiery pot, and boiled him into nothingness.[256] The saints in question were all from Burgundy: Agricola of Chalon, and Gregory's relatives, Tetricus of Langres, and Nicetius of Lyons.[257] In the sentence wherein the king introduced his dream, the writer caused Guntram to remark that his vision "announced [Chilperic's] perishing (*interitum*)."[258] Our author here deployed his preferred term for conveying an estimation of a soul perishing in direct speech, causing Guntram to explicitly declare the eternal fate which the details of the king's hellish vision suggest his brother suffered.

In fact, this well-known scene was not the first instance in the *Historiae* in which Gregory deployed direct discourse from Guntram's mouth to voice

41-51, who makes Chilperic out to be Gregory's "godless king," and who, at ibid., 62, follows de Nie by asserting how Gregory's dream confirms Chilperic was "a bishop in the church of the Antichrist." Heinzelmann could have included Chilperic in his short list of those whose "bad deaths" Gregory announced by using *De interitu* in *capitula* of the *Historiae*; ibid., 138, n. 94.

253 Gregory covered the gathering at Orléans in July 585 over seven chapters: *Historiae* 8.1-7.

254 *Historiae* 8.5.

255 Carozzi, *Le Voyage de l'Âme*, 65, asserts that Gregory's dream insufficiently reflects the afterlife and therefore only represents Chilperic's *malitia*. Isabel Moreira, *Dreams, Visions*, 97, proposes that Gregory's dream reflects a twisted play on liturgical imagery, suitable for a king who, Gregory suspected, had desired to wield the authority of both king and bishop.

256 De Nie, *Views*, 286, pointed out the Celtic motif of a sacrificial cauldron. Moreira, *Dreams, Visions*, 97-98, more broadly notes the cauldron as "a common chthonic image in Germanic, Celtic, and Pictish lore, and known in Christian images of the afterlife as well." Moreira further identifies the cauldron in Guntram's dream as an example of an image of damnation, a motif rarely utilized in afterlife visions prior to the twelfth century; eadem, *Heaven's Purge*, 204-05.

257 On the tradition of kings and emperors dreaming: Moreira, *Dreams, Visions*, 95. For Guntram's dream representing a judgment and immediate hellish sentence: Carozzi, *Le Voyage de l'Âme*, 65. For the implications of royal versus episcopal power in the two men's dreams: Moreira, *Dreams, Visions*, 98-99.

258 *Historiae* 8.5.

his own appraisal of the fates of that king's brothers. In *Historiae* 7 the writer presented Guntram giving a speech to envoys of King Childebert II shortly after Chilperic's death and burial in 584. Guntram had marched an army into Paris, and when Childebert II advanced to do likewise, he was prevented from entering the city. Angered by Childebert's envoys' hypocritical appeal to keep to the two kings' treaty, this after Childebert himself had betrayed the older king by allying with Chilperic in 581, Guntram produced the treaty he had made with his brothers prior to Sigibert's death. The king of Burgundy explained:

> Behold the pact that was made among us [brothers, which stipulates] that if anyone should enter Paris without his brother's allowance, he should give up his part [of the deceased Charibert's lands]. Furthermore, the martyr Polyeuctus along with the confessors Hilary and Martin will be his judge and punisher. Afterwards, my brother Sigibert entered this place, who *perishing by the judgment of God* (*interiens iudicio Dei*), lost his part. Chilperic then acted likewise. By virtue of their transgressions, both lost their parts [of the territory]. They both expired (*defecerunt*) according to the *judgment of God* (*Dei iudicium*) and the maledictions within the treaty.[259]

Here Gregory used direct speech to emphasize the significance of the quoted contents. Through Guntram's mouth the writer explained how King Sigibert had been divinely judged and his soul "perished." In particular, what brought God's judgment down upon Sigibert's head, and Chilperic's too, is that they both broke an oath taken in the name of three saints.[260] As Stefan Esders has recently detailed, the cult of one of the three, the eastern martyr Polyeuctus, may have been brought to Gaul through Sigibert's court.[261] Furthermore, Polyeuctus was particularly known in the west for taking vengeance against perjurers.[262] Besides our author adjusting details

259 *Historiae* 7.6.

260 Gregory believed that sworn peace treaties, *sacramenta*, were inviolable. An army that ignored such an agreement would incur God's anger and lose its contest, while its opponent would enjoy God's help; Wynn, "Wars and Warriors," 7. Wynn, ibid., suggests Joshua 9 as the source for Gregory's convictions about the *sacramentum*.

261 Later sources indicate Metz is a western city where Polyeuctus was revered. Sigibert may have built the church of Saint Polyeuctus as part of his and Brunhild's building campaign for the king's new capital city, Metz; Esders, "'Avenger of all Perjury,'" 27-33.

262 Gregory was familiar with the church of Saint Polyeuctus at Constantinople through a tale wherein a pious aristocratic matron tricked Emperor Justinian from taking all of her gold by ordering that it be used to decorate the church's ceiling. According to our author, anyone who

such as inserting into the king's speech his own preferred terminology for inferring condemnation, I see no reason to suspect Gregory was not more or less accurately relating Guntram's own opinion about Sigibert's ruin. Perhaps the bishop only learned about the full details of this pact between Guntram, Sigibert, and Chilperic in the aftermath of Chilperic's demise, while Tours momentarily rested under Guntram's control. It may have been during this span of about a year that Gregory developed a keen appreciation of the ruler of the Burgundian sub-kingdom. If Gregory did in fact learn the details about the three kings' treaty from Guntram in 584, this latest evidence will have only confirmed what he already realized in 575. Guntram's remarks provided similar elucidation about the parties responsible for Chilperic's fate, the same three saints who took vengeance after Chilperic infringed against the pact. But what of the three saints who punished the Neustrian ruler as portrayed in Guntram's dream? If in fact Guntram actually divulged his dream about Saints Agricola, Tetricus and Nicetius during the 585 banquet, it is likely he did this to help establish an association with the bishop of Tours. Likewise, Gregory's inclusion in his text of an account of the two dreams served a similar purpose of emphasizing a bond that came to exist between the two men, a bond symbolized through the expression of a united resolve shared amongst three Burgundian saints against a wicked king.

Gregory's technique of giving emphasis to his estimation about the fates of Sigibert and Chilperic through direct discourse out of King Guntram's mouth reminds of how the writer advanced his own ideas about salvation for people who died soon after baptism through Queen Clotild's speech. His decisions to convey meaningful messages about afterlife through these figures was based on a sincere appreciation for both individuals' trustworthy and holy characters. As he did for all contemporary Merovingians whose fates he pondered, the bishop did not depict King Guntram behaving entirely without fault.[263] As has already been mentioned, among early references to the king in the *Historiae*, Gregory expressed how Guntram's sins were partly responsible, alongside Sigibert's, for bringing about the civil war of the mid-570s. Nowhere in the *Historiae*, however, did the author indicate that Guntram was ever the first to send armies into battle against one of his

committed a crime and was brought to that church either confessed for fear of the martyr or was "smote by divine vengeance" (*ultione divina perculitur*); *GM* 102. For this church at Constantinople: Harrison, "Church of St. Polyeuktos." On the martyr and his early cult: Esders, "'Avenger of all Perjury,'" 17-21.

263 Goffart, *Narrators*, 178, 225-27; Wood, "Secret Histories," 259-64; Breukelaar, *Historiography*, 238-39.

brothers, or versus his nephew Childebert II.[264] But if King Guntram was the least pugnacious of his family, he did have a couple of lingering character flaws which Gregory did not cover up, such as a deep sense of paranoia.[265] More problematic from the bishop's moral perspective was the Burgundian monarch's prolonged habit of executing individuals without seemingly sufficient cause. For example, in 577 Guntram executed the two brothers of his second wife after they reputedly slandered the king's third wife and their sons.[266] The author poignantly noted that it was not long after the king did this that his own two sons died of dysentery. Deprived of direct heirs, Guntram adopted his nephew Childebert II as his own son and bequeathed the Burgundian sub-kingdom to the young Austrasian ruler. Gregory even caused Guntram to admit during the public adoption ceremony that his childlessness was the result of his own sins (*inpulso peccatorum meorum*).[267] A second regrettable execution happened in 580 when King Guntram's aforementioned third wife, Austrechildis, lay on her deathbed during an epidemic of dysentery. The queen insisted that her husband promise to avenge her upcoming demise by killing the attending physicians. Gregory noted that the request happened before the woman breathed out her *nequam spiritum*. He further impressed on readers the wickedness of the person who made the proposal by pointing out how none other than Herod once made

264 Although Guntram sinfully ignored his bishops' pleas to keep peace and then made and unmade alliances with Chilperic versus Sigibert in 474 and 475, the king of Burgundy did not initiate war by marching on the offensive versus Sigibert; *Historiae* 4.47 The closest Gregory came to presenting Guntram acting aggressively against Childebert II's interests was in the immediate aftermath of Chilperic's death in 584, when the old king sent armies to take Tours and Poitiers, which cities formerly belonged to Sigibert; *Historiae* 7.12-13. Gregory depicted Guntram explaining to Childebert's envoys that those cities were rightfully his as per the details of a treaty he had made with his brothers; *Historiae* 7.14. Unlike Bishop Maroveus of Poitiers, who wished to resist Guntram taking control of Poitiers, Gregory supported letting the elder ruler keep Tours until the two kings reached an arrangement. In 585 Guntram sent levies of men from Orléans and Bourges to ravage Poitou and force the Poitevins into submission. The same force pillaged the Touraine while passing through; *Historiae* 7.24. By the end of 585, however, Guntram made peace with Childebert and restored both cities to his nephew; *Historiae* 7.33.

265 E. g., *Historiae* 7.8; and see Halsall, "Nero and Herod?" 347; Goffart, *Narrators*, 178.

266 *Historiae* 5.17. Guntram's first wife, Veneranda, was of servile origin. The couple had a son, Gundobad, whose name harkens back to the earlier Burgundian king. The king's second wife was Marcatrudis, the daughter of a certain Magnachar. Guntram sent his son Gundobad to Orléans, perhaps to keep him safe from his stepmother. But when Marcatrudis gave birth to a son, she reportedly saw to it that Gundobad was killed by poisoning. The king expelled Marcatrudis from court, after which she died (*mortua est*). It is unknown what became of Guntram's anonymous son by Marcatrudis. Guntram's third wife was Austrechildis. The couple's two sons were named Chlothar and Chlodomer; *Historiae* 4.25.

267 *Historiae* 5.17. Similarly, see *Historiae* 7.33.

a similar deathbed appeal. Then the writer caused Austrechildis herself to remark: "I still would have hope of living, if by the hands of such evil doctors I had not perished (*interissem*)."[268] Here Gregory deployed the word *interissem* with utmost ironic effect, through direct speech coming from the mouth of the very *nequa mulier* whose soul was about to "perish" for eternity.[269] Gregory reported that after the queen's funeral King Guntram was "forced" (*oppressus*) to comply with his evil wife's (*iniquae coniugis*) request, because he was bound to fulfill the promise he had made to her. Despite this seeming effort to minimize the king's guilt for enacting the doctors' executions, our author nevertheless remarked that committing such an act was "not without sin" (*non sine peccato facto*).

Another individual whose death Guntram suborned, and not without behaving somewhat sinfully in the process, was Chilperic's *cubicularius* Eberulf, who demanded asylum in Saint Martin's basilica at Tours after his lord's decease.[270] Gregory reported that in 584 Guntram sent a man named Claudius to apprehend Eberulf, but the king specifically instructed his agent to remove the culprit from the church before either killing or shackling him. Knowing that Eberulf was an enemy of Chilperic's widow, Fredegund, Claudius sought an audience with the queen in order to secure extra loot for doing what he already had been tasked to accomplish. But Fredegund went beyond Guntram's directions by instructing Claudius that in order to guarantee him slaying or arresting Eberulf, he should do the deed in the basilica's atrium if necessary. Here Gregory diminished the taint of the king's somewhat sacrilegious command by enabling readers instead to the focus on the contrast between Guntram's respect for Saint Martin versus the queen's utter lack of concern for perpetrating a sacrilege.[271] At the basilica, after gaining Eberulf's trust by making many false oaths not to harm him, Claudius did in fact attack his victim in the building's atrium, as Fredegund had permitted. As a result, all hell broke loose inside the church: Eberulf and Claudius were cut down, the two men's many servants

268 *Historiae* 5.35. It is worth noting that Austrechildis died in bed of dystenery. This reveals how Gregory did not intend *interire* simply to mean a violent death; see above, p. 181, n. 138.

269 The *capitulum* for the chapter detailing Austrechildis' demise simply reads *De Austrechilde regina*; it lacks the usual *De obitu* or *De interitu*; *Historiae* 5.35 *capitulum*.

270 *Historiae* 7.29. Gregory listed the *cubicularius*'s crimes, including thefts of others' property, murders, and drunkenness. The writer also fully detailed Eberulf's sacrilegious and violent conduct while in sanctuary at Tours. After Gregory described to Eberulf a vision in which the bishop tried to protect the villain from King Guntram while the latter sought to seize hold of him, the *cubicularius* threatened to kill Gregory and as many clerics as possible before he died. Eberulf was not a duke; *contra* Jones, *Social Mobility*, 60, 231.

271 Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 138.

clashed with one another, and then the basilica's incensed dependents, including the registered poor and energumens, avenged their holy patron by slaughtering all who did not manage to escape. Gregory ended the chapter by reporting how King Guntram was indignant upon hearing the news of the blood spilt in Martin's basilica, and so he confiscated all of Eberulf's property. There was nothing to suggest that Gregory thought the king was to blame for the murderous episode. Otherwise, the writer indicated how Eberulf received his eternal just desserts by entitling the chapter *De interitu Eberulfi*.

A final victim executed by Guntram's order was the ruler's own *cubicularius*, Chundo, who met his end in 590. The trouble started after the king inquired about an aurochs found dead in the woods and the royal forester blamed the chamberlain. When the two officials argued at court, Guntram decided to settle the matter with a trial by battle. The contest did not reveal the guilty party, however, because both the forester and Chundo's second died. Upon seeing this result, Chundo suddenly bolted towards Saint Marcellus's church. The king called for his men to grab him before he arrived at the basilica's threshold, and with this achieved, Chundo was executed by stoning. Gregory concluded the chapter by pointing out that the king was filled with remorse for losing his temper and depriving himself of a loyal servant.[272] Despite him noting Guntram's regret, this did not mean Gregory intended readers to think the ruler was responsible for the *cubicularius*'s death, for the chapter is entitled *De interitu Chundonis, cubicularii eius*. For Chundo's demise, and that for Eberulf as well, the author interpreted the real bringer of death to be a just God, who imparted His judgment on the sinful malefactors. Guntram, therefore, was not really responsible for either man's extinction. Indeed, what Gregory wanted readers to take from the last anecdote was an admiration for how King Guntram, in the heat of the moment when Chundo was rushing towards the church, had been concerned to guarantee the integrity of Saint-Marcellus's by assuring the culprit did not gain entry to the church.[273]

In addition to carefully crafting Guntram to be more often a victim of circumstance than an aggressive monarch, or one incapable of remorse, Gregory otherwise lauded the ruler with the most praise given to any

272 *Historiae* 10.10.

273 Compare *GC* 86, in which Guntram arrested people after the theft of his hunting horn, but three suspects managed to find sanctuary at the church of Saint Sequanus of Langres. Guntram ordered that the men be bound, but after it was reported to him that the saint shattered the captives' fetters and chains, the king responded properly by becoming fearful of the power God's agent exhibited, and by acting immediately to secure the men's release.

Merovingian king since Theudebert.[274] The writer provided two extensive portrayals of himself meeting in person with Guntram. In the first of these, a gathering of the king with bishops at Orléans in 585, Gregory portrayed Guntram over the course of seven chapters as a model pious monarch.[275] One feature that heartened Gregory was the distrust Guntram exhibited towards the community's Jews after they praised the ruler upon his arrival. Gregory was also pleased by the king's refusal to fund repairs for the city's synagogue.[276] Otherwise, the author was impressed that Guntram closed

274 On Gregory's growing appreciation for Guntram, especially from 585: Breukelaar, *Historiography*, 239-40. Likewise, see James, *The Franks*, 177-82.

275 Based on the surviving evidence, Guntram may have been the Merovingian of his generation most actively involved in promoting legislation for a Christian society. Greg Halfond lists nearly a dozen church councils that met in the *Regnum Gunthramni*: Lyons (567/570), Paris (573), Chalon (579), Lyons (581), Mâcon (581/583), Valence (583/585), Mâcon (585), two councils of unknown provenance in 588, an unknown council in 589, and Poitiers (589/590); Halfond, "All the King's Men," 81-84. Among the seventeen bishops whom Halfond identifies as part of Guntram's core episcopal supporters was one of Gregory's "villains," the staunch opponent of the cult of Saint Nicetius of Lyons, Priscus of Lyons. Another of Guntram's core bishops was a supporter of Nicetius's cult, Syagrius of Autun; ibid., 81, 84-89.

Gregory did not report the death of Bishop Priscus in 586, even though this would have enabled him to indicate the ascension of Aetherius of Lyons, who was favorable to Nicetius's memory. Instead the writer claimed that God and Saint Nicetius took vengeance on Priscus and his household, who *semper* lifted their nefarious voices (*nefariis vocibus*) against the saint. Specifically, a demon possessed Priscus's wife, after which she in her maddened state appealed for Nicetius to forgive her, apparently in vain. Following a quartan ague Priscus himself was left permanently (*semper*) shaking and senseless, while his son and household also became mentally befuddled. Particularly in regards to Priscus, Gregory apparently meant *semper* to indicate how the villain remained in this anguished state unto his demise, a sure sign of his soul's condemnation. If there is some fact to the prelate dying in this manner, presumably Priscus's affliction happened after he presided over the Council of Mâcon in 585, which synod Gregory attended, he being the only Austrasian prelate to do so. Gregory provided a rare consideration of this council's proceedings, but rather than credit Priscus for his leading role, he only mentioned how the bishop of Lyons' servants and those of a duke engaged in a great slaughter (*caedis*) until Priscus paid them to stop fighting. This is Priscus's last appearance in the history as it stands; *Historiae* 8.20.

A significant reason the synod was convened was so that the bishops and King Guntram could determine punishments for those bishops who had supported the pretender Gundovald. Towards the end of the anecdote Gregory related how Guntram became so ill, some thought he might die. The writer then personally attributed the illness to the *providentia Dei*, since Guntram had been contemplating sending many bishops into exile. Apparently, the king also took this illness as a sign of divine displeasure and changed his mind, for Gregory remarked that Theodore of Marseilles, the bishop who had been most fully involved in the treasonous affair, was permitted to return to his see. For an excellent comparison of Gregory's account of Mâcon with the synod's surviving canons, which reveals "fundamental disagreements between Priscus and Nicetius and between Gregory and Priscus about the resources for legitimation for the church in this post-Roman kingdom": Reimitz, "True Differences," with quote at 25.

276 *Historiae* 8.1.

out a first banquet by requesting that the bishops give him their blessings to secure his salvation, and the following day he toured the saints' basilicas for morning prayers.[277] At a second banquet Guntram showed the ecclesiastics a massive church dish taken from the treasure of the deceased traitor Mummolus, and he explained how he was going to distribute other plates among the churches and the poor.[278] The author likely expected readers to compare this scene with that in which Chilperic had shown off his collection of imperial medallions while thinking only of the worldly glory they reflected upon him.[279] Next Guntram asked the bishops to pray for the health of young Childebert II and he shared a story about how the latter was born auspiciously on an Easter Sunday.[280] It was after this that Gregory and Guntram traded tales of their aforementioned dreams which intimated Chilperic's damnation.[281] Finally, the king mercifully conceded to Bishop Gregory's request that he pardon two men who had taken sanctuary at Saint Martin's basilica after having treasonously supported the pretender Gundovald.[282]

Gregory's second meeting with King Guntram happened in 588 when the latter summoned the bishop to Chalon to explain Childebert II's behaviors in the wake of the two kings making a treaty the year before. To begin the chapter Gregory reported how Guntram angrily presented two grievances involving his younger counterpart not keeping his part of the arrangement. The bishop assured that both matters would be addressed to the ruler's satisfaction. Next Guntram ordered the treaty to be read aloud – Gregory reproduced the Treaty of Andelot in full in the *Historiae*. Following this, the writer caused Guntram to declare: "May I incur God's judgment (*Iudicio Dei ferear*) if I violate any of the terms contained in this treaty."[283] It seems clear that as an envoy representing King Childebert II in 588, Gregory's goal was to

277 *Historiae* 8.1-2. Guntram also visited with Gregory personally on the second day and the two shared bread that had been blessed at Martin's basilica. By way of contrast, at lunch Guntram roundly upbraided Bishops Bertram of Bordeaux and Palladius of Saintes for the treasonous acts they had committed in support of the pretender Gundovald; *Historiae* 8.2.

278 *Historiae* 8.3. Guntram also dutifully shared a portion of the treasure with Gregory's new sovereign, King Childebert II.

279 Gregory may have intended the scene to favorably compare Guntram's charity towards the poor with that of Emperor Tiberius; Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 52 n. 33, 56. For a recent consideration of parallels between Justin II and Tiberius compared with Chilperic and Guntram: Lucas, "*Magnus et Verus Christianus*."

280 *Historiae* 8.4, and see below, p. 291.

281 *Historiae* 8.5.

282 *Historiae* 8.6.

283 *Historiae* 9.20.

assure the Austrasian court's continued cooperation with the older king, for whom the bishop had developed a strong personal admiration.[284] Interestingly, although Gregory himself strenuously endeavored to undermine his readers' confidence in thinking Queen Fredegund's sole surviving son, Chlothar II, was the legitimate offspring of King Chilperic, this did not stop him from depicting how Guntram eventually arrived at a different conclusion about the boy's paternity.[285] Gregory depicted Guntram in response to the Austrasian court's concerns for him engaging in communications with the Neustrians, then ruled by Fredegund on Chlothar II's behalf, adopting a mediating position between his two nephews.[286] Although the bishop did not accept Chlothar's legitimacy, Gregory admired the king's bishop-like sensibilities. The author finished the chapter about his 588 visit by writing that at dinner the old king spoke about God, and about building churches and providing for the poor.

Guntram died in March 592. Gregory's only mention of the king's death appears in a temporal clause in *VSM* 4: "*post obitum gloriosissimi regis Gunthramni…*"[287] The anecdote reveals that Childebert II, his queen Faileuba, and Bishop Gregory were among the attendees at the aged monarch's funeral at Orléans.[288] The tale also indicates how the author was willing to remark about Guntram's death in his writings. According to Martin Heinzelmann, Gregory intended *Historiae* 7 to 9 to project a theme of the *bonus rex*, focusing on Guntram, in antithesis to *Historiae* 5 and 6's *malus rex*, about Chilperic.[289] A problem with that theory is that Gregory did not end *Historiae* 9 with a chapter *De obitu Gunthramni regis*.[290] Heinzelmann blames part of the problem on the fact that Guntram lived a few years longer than what would

284 Gregory depicted himself standing before the Austrasian monarch and asserting how Guntram and Childebert had reason to support and love one another, this after bishops from Childebert's realm had balked at Guntram's proposal to convene an episcopal synod with ecclesiastics from both realms; *Historiae* 8.13.

285 On the multiple techniques Gregory used to call Chlothar II's paternity into question: Dailey, "Gregory of Tours," especially 7-17.

286 Guntram's motives for protecting Chlothar II may not have been simply paternal. Having already adopted Childebert II, taking advantage of Fredegund's offer to adopt Chlothar II put the elder monarch in a position of becoming a virtual *de facto* overlord for all of Merovingian Gaul; *Historiae* 7.6-7; Dailey, "Gregory of Tours," 13.

287 *VSM* 4.37.

288 Gregory reportedly was on hand to save the lives of one of King Childebert II's servants and one of Queen Faileuba's servants by administering a potion mixed with dust from Saint Martin's tomb; *VSM* 4.37.

289 Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 51-75.

290 Cf. Shanzer, "Review Article," 255, who writes: "It is hard to argue for a good king trilogy that is not rounded out with the obit (not *interitus*!) of said virtuous monarch."

have been useful for fitting Gregory's chronological narrative.[291] The scholar also attributes the lack of proper closure for the "Guntram books" to Gregory on theological grounds having to avoid representing Christian society being ruled by a "truly Christian" king, which would be an impossibility prior to Final Judgment.[292] To be sure, Gregory intended Guntram's *bonitas* as a prominent theme for *Historiae* 7 to 9 and maybe *Historiae* 10, as well. But the author did not open *Historiae* 7 intending a chapter on the death and salvation of Salvius of Albi to act as a "type of prologue" for the remainder of that book.[293] Instead, Gregory meant the tale about that new heaven-dwelling saint to provide an immediate antithetical contrast to the contents of the preceding chapter, *Historiae* 6.46, about Chilperic's death and damnation. Heinzelmann loses his way by attempting to make of King Guntram a typological fulfillment of King Hezekiah. Nothing in *Historiae* 7 textually links Guntram with Hezekiah, whom our author only mentioned at *Historiae* 2 prologue.[294] Heinzelmann was closer to correct in blaming Guntram for living too long rather than in citing Gregory's theology to explain why the writer did not address the king's death in the *Historiae*.

In fact, Gregory did compose a chapter extolling Guntram's virtues, written after the king's death, which the author situated in the chapter following that which reproduces the Treaty of Andelot. Gregory entitled *Historiae* 9.21 *De elymosinis et bonitate ipsius regis*.[295] The writer opened this chapter by noting how Guntram was recognized for his charity and for steadfastly keeping vigils and fasts. He then explained that when an outbreak of plague spread from Marseilles towards Lyons, the king, "like a good bishop" (*acsi bonus sacerdos*), instituted a Rogations ceremony and demanded that the region's inhabitants behave penitently. Guntram himself increased his almsgiving and showed so much concern for his subjects that he seemed, again, "less like a king than a bishop" (*non rex tantum, sed etiam sacerdos*). Gregory additionally wrote: "He put his whole hope in the compassion of our Lord, directing all his prayers towards Him, from which action he believed these prayers would be realized because of the complete integrity of his faith."[296] By this sentence Gregory asserted that the king now possessed a

291 Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 144.

292 Ibid., 144-45.

293 Ibid., 52.

294 Neither do the problems that beset Poitiers, Orléans, and Tours in 585 necessarily correspond with the troubles Jerusalem experienced under Hezekiah. Shanzer, "Review Article," 255, *contra* Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 57.

295 *Historiae* 9.21 *capitulum*.

296 *Historiae* 9.21; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 510.

faith capable of moving mountains. Indeed, the author next recounted a tale that the faithful were sharing (*a fidelibus ferebatur*) about a woman who secretly cut threads from the monarch's cloak and administered them in a potion to her ill son, who thereby was cured of a quartan ague (*quartano*). Gregory lent support to the veracity of this miracle story by claiming that he himself had often heard certain energumens invoking the king's name and declaring their crimes, thereby "revealing that man's power" (*virtute ipsius discernente*).[297] In arraying the contents of this chapter, the writer was not attempting to avoid portraying a living "true Christian" king; rather, he was establishing the sanctity of a dead Merovingian monarch.[298] Our author was wont to show that through attentiveness to almsgiving among other penitent practices, the king had achieved in his lifetime a perfect faith. Like Abbot Abraham of the Auvergne, Guntram advanced sufficiently far along his path of righteousness that he achieved a level of grace which enabled him to perform miracles prior to death, even if unwittingly. Unlike the healing miracle using the still-living king's cloak, however, the spectacles Gregory claimed to witness of demoniacs calling out Guntram's name must have happened *post mortem*. They may have featured as part of a production to establish the deceased's holy *praesentia* during the king's funeral, which the bishop attended.[299] Gregory will have interpreted these latter wonders as proof of the dead monarch's sanctity. By penning these miracle stories, the writer himself was taking part in an effort to canonize the first Merovingian since Radegund; the first Merovingian male since Chlodovald; and the first Merovingian king ever.[300] Gregory was not building up Guntram as a new Hezekiah; the king was to be a *novus Sigismundus*.[301] Just as the latter,

297 *Historiae* 9.21.

298 Folz, "Der Frage."

299 Gregory at the funeral: *VSM* 4.37. Compare with the last days of Gregory's friend, Aredius of Limoges. When the aged abbot was approaching death, a possessed woman's demon claimed that many saints were gathering unto the holy man's deathbed. After Aredius's passing, the saint expelled demons from this and another woman at his funeral. Gregory reasoned that God delayed the miracles so they would serve to glorify Aredius during the ceremony; *Historiae* 10.29; Wood, "Topographies of Holy Power," 145.

300 On the torturous subject of the saint-king: e. g., Folz, *Les saints rois*; Graus, *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger*, 390-433; Nelson, "Royal Saints." Unlike Sigismund, Guntram does not fit into Graus's model of a saint-king being either a betrayed monk or martyr; Graus, *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger*, 396-98, 427-33.

301 Folz, "Zur Frage," especially 320, 326. Gregory's account of miracles occurring at Sigismund's tomb attested that the king of the Burgundians was a true martyr; Paxton, "Power to Heal," 97. The tale of Guntram healing the child's fever through the king's cloak recalls a scene from the *Vita Apollinaris*, wherein the holy bishop of Valence healed Sigismund of a fever though the medium of the king's cloak; *Vita Apollinaris* 6. Sigismund's specialty in healing fevers, and

according to the author, had overcome the ignominy of killing his own son through lasting pious and penitent efforts, so did Gregory imagine that Guntram had performed sufficient good works and penance to overcome the sins he had acquired while conducting his royal duties, such as his early, more questionable executions. Gregory ventured beyond *Historiae* 9 into the next book to situate the tale of Guntram's execution of his *cubicularius* in proper chronological order. Furthermore, he recorded in *Historiae* 10 how the king answered Fredegund's request to receive Chlothar II at his baptism in 591 at Paris. The author accurately depicted Childebert II's envoys accusing the elder king of setting Chlothar II on a throne at Paris and breaking his promise to his nephew. Gregory even caused the Austrasian envoys to declare: "God will sit in judgment on you for having forgotten all your pledges, which were, moreover, freely given."[302] To this the devout monarch was made to answer: "As God knows full well, I am performing this act in no deceitful spirit, but in all the simplicity of a pure heart, for I tremble to think what divine anger I should incur if I did otherwise."[303] Our author closed this, Guntram's last speech, with the king assuring he would keep to the treaty's slightest detail. Again, even though Gregory himself strongly questioned Chlothar's legitimacy, he could not begrudge Guntram towards the end of his life acting fairly towards both of his nephews. This mediatory position may not have been required of a king, but it was suitable for a saint. Although

especially quartan agues, was even more commonly known through the *Missa in honore Sancti Sigismundi,* with which Gregory was familiar; Helvétius, "De l'assassinat," 56; Paxton, "Liturgy and Healing," 26-31; and see above, pp. 199-200 n. 180.

In one book of the *Miracula*, our author tellingly placed two anecdotes about the rulers of Burgundy side by side. In one chapter of the *GM* Gregory addressed how Sigismund went to the monastery of Saint-Maurice d'Agaune to seek atonement from the martyrs of the Theban Legion, and in the next chapter, dedicated to those same martyrs, he described how Guntram fulfilled a vow by sending a priest to obtain relics of the legionnaires from the abbey; *GM* 74-75. From Gregory's contemporary, Marius of Avenches, it is known that Guntram showed his devotion to St.-Maurice d'Agaune by commissioning repairs to the monastery after the Lombards occupied it in 574; Marius of Avenches, *Chronica* s. a. 574. Gregory, when he completed rebuilding the cathedral at Tours in 590, which had been destroyed by fire, explained how he located relics of the Theban Legion that had miraculously been removed from the building during the conflagration, and he installed them anew in the cathedral; *Historiae* 10.31; Paxton, "Power to Heal," 107. Returning to *GM* 75, the episcopal devotee to the legionnaires offered the following general appraisal about the king: "King Guntram so dedicated himself to spiritual behavior that he abandoned the trappings of this world and spent his wealth on the poor and churches"; *GM* 75; trans. by Van Dam, *Saints*, 98. This passage, which obviously was penned after the king's demise, encapsulates the pastor's general prescription for those striving to merit salvation, a feat which Gregory believed Guntram had accomplished.

302 *Historiae* 10.28; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 588.

303 *Historiae* 10.28; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 588.

Gregory loyally maintained the Austrasian court's stance on Chlothar II's suspected paternity, he apparently was unwilling to allow this to stop him from advocating for Guntram's sainthood, which condition his reading of the *post mortem* signs proved.

Conclusion

Back in late 575 and shortly thereafter, when Gregory first started interpreting the signs surrounding Sigibert's demise, he must have been increasingly horrified as the reports rolled in: first, intelligence that the king was going to march on Tournai and perhaps kill his own brother; second, the inconceivable news of Sigibert's assassination; third, word that Germanus of Paris had forbade the Austrasian ruler to assail his brother; and perhaps fourth, possible receipt via his great-uncle Duke Gundulf of a copy of Bishop Germanus's seemingly prophetic epistle to Queen Brunhild, warning the king against taking military action against his brother.[304] As Gregory inspected the mounting evidence and inched towards a full realization that his former *gloriosissimus* lord's soul was deservedly damned, the bishop simultaneously dealt with a succession of depredations on his diocese: Roccolen's occupation, Prince Clovis's march, Merovech's stay at Martin's basilica, and a final retributive strike on Tours around 577. In these times powerful royal officials were luring levies of men away from their homes with promises of loot and, as often as not, they were leading the same men to ruin. Soldiers were pillaging cathedrals, saints' basilicas, and monasteries; many combatants and countless congregants were being cut down; thereby, all were being deprived of precious time required for repenting sins. It was not simply death and destruction that caused Gregory to augment his fledgling hagiographical writing program in the mid-570s with history; rather, it was an immeasurable increase in the loss of souls which the civil war was producing. Our author conceived of writing the *Historiae* in order to effectively communicate to the kings and their men the consequences of their sins for themselves and their subjects. For the *Historiae* Gregory started compiling select historical information that rulers could analyze, probably with the aid of ecclesiastical direction, through which they could learn how to comprehend the patterned, eschatological significance behind so many images of this-worldly events, death prominent among these. As Guy Halsall has addressed, Gregory situated the heart of his message at what

304 On Germanus's letter: Halsall, "Preface to Book V," 313-14, and see above, pp. 116-18.

eventually became *Historiae* 5 prologue.[305] There the author contrasted the mighty Clovis, who built power by warring against *noxiae gentes* and then imposing peace upon them, with the present generation of Frankish royals who warred against one another to amass more gold for treasuries that were already full to overflowing. Gregory wrote: "But you, what are you doing? What are you trying to do? You have everything you want! Your homes are full of luxuries, there are vast supplies of wine, grain and oil in your store-houses, and in your treasuries the gold and silver are piled high. Only one thing is lacking: you cannot keep peace, and therefore you do not know the grace of God."[306] Here Gregory's soteriological lesson was that a king who focuses on greed becomes deprived of God's divine grace, which is necessary for salvation. Gregory invited his royal audience to consider the example Orosius once provided of how the Carthaginian empire fell because its rulers abandoned the concord which had sustained it for seven centuries. He cautioned the Frank monarchs against the discord inherent in civil warfare, which he declared was already destroying them along with their subjects, and which eventually would result in the loss of their realms. He advised that each Frankish royal should address the internal discord which lies within his chest, that he allow his virtues to suppress vices, and that he serve Christ so that as a free person he might break away from the chains of greed. Gregory's solution for the political and social ills that were belaboring late sixth-century Gaul was for each Merovingian king to responsibly tend to the condition of his own soul.

305 Halsall, "Preface to Book V."
306 *Historiae* 5 prologue; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 253.

6. Conclusion

Death was a constant around which Gregory, like countless other Christians, constructed the central meaning of life, to overcome it through attaining salvation. The bishop preached how people could accomplish this through contrition and by living a virtuous life. Necessary to the salvific process was the accumulation of sin-annulling divine grace, which Gregory believed one could accumulate by participating in the sacraments, obeying one's ecclesiastical betters, and especially by developing an unquestioning reliance on, and loyalty to, the saints. Because he regarded physical death as a cutoff point after which there could be no further effective effort to remove sin from one's soul – although one might tender a final appeal for a saint to intercede on one's behalf on Judgment Day –, Gregory exhorted sinners to take action while they still lived. He encouraged them to address their inner struggles: to practice virtues, overcome vices, and become servants of Christ.[1] It is ironic that this bishop, who maintained a conviction that humans had a limited opportunity to repent while still living, in the first four years of his episcopal tenure witnessed alarming numbers of people being deprived of those precious moments. He feared his congregants, and other acquaintances, from king to common soldier, losing their souls as a consequence. It has been argued in this book that the many deaths inflicted on Gallic inhabitants during the tumults of the mid-570s, residents of the Touraine especially, along with the startling special case of King Sigibert's assassination, compelled Gregory to complement his hagiography with history. As his years as a bishop progressed and he put his pastoral messages to paper, Gregory simultaneously did what he always had, elude Death.

The contents for the final six books of the *Historiae* reveal how Death continued to haunt Gregory following the civil wars of the 570s. One potentially deadly incident was the bishop's 580 trial for accusing Queen Fredegund of adultery. Although the writer portrayed himself showing a brave face, this may have actually constituted a life-jeopardizing situation on par with his earlier, nearly fatal illnesses.[2] Even if it is rather unlikely he would

1 *Historiae* 5 prologue.

2 The fact that the covetous and conspiratorial senior Riculf started taking an inventory of Tours' church plate and parceling out the church's properties while the bishop was standing trial at Berny suggests that the priest at least thought the proceeding was going to cost Gregory his post, and perhaps also his life; *Historiae* 5.49. Wood, *Gregory of Tours*, 16, writes that Riculf's inventory signaled that Gregory was "legally dead." On Gregory's trial as potentially deadly, and the discovery of his history, had it ever happened, even more so: Wood, "Secret Histories," 257-59.

have received a death penalty had he been charged with slandering Queen Fredegund, the designs of his conspiratorial subordinates posed a real threat to the prelate's life. Gregory related that upon his return to Tours after the trial, the disconsolate priest Riculf frequently threatened to kill him, until finally the superior removed the foe to a distant monastery.[3] Another scrape with Death happened in the wake of Chilperic's demise in 584 while that king's *cubicularius* Eberulf was claiming sanctuary at Martin's basilica. During that time Gregory recounted to Eberulf a confusing dream he had wherein the bishop manfully (*viriliter*) prevented King Guntram from seizing the asylum-seeker, while the *cubicularius* weakly (*tepide*) released hold of the church altar two times. Eberulf then offered to explain the dream. He told Gregory that if the king did try to retrieve him from the church, he was going to leave the altar, cut down the bishop with his sword, and slay as many clerics as he could.[4] Gregory evaded Death yet again in 585 soon after a visit to one of King Childebert II's manors when a ferry that he and a crowd of people boarded began taking on water.[5] Fortunately for all, the craft was turned around and safely made it back to shore. Gregory attributed everyone's survival to the power of Saint Martin and other saints whose relics he had been carrying on his person. Otherwise, our author did not express whether he felt his life was personally threatened when an epidemic claimed many lives at Tours and Nantes in 591; in that instance the bishop instituted Rogations, thereby placating God's wrath and quelling the loss of life.[6] This anecdote about the plague is the next to last chapter of the

One may compare Gregory's plight with that of Bishop Aegidius, who, when he was found guilty of committing treason against Childebert II, reportedly admitted he deserved to be executed; *Historiae* 10.19. Unlike Aegidius, Gregory enjoyed the benefit of a friendly neighborhood poet. Fortunatus penned a panegyric delivered to Chilperic at Berny which may have helped smooth over relations between Gregory and the Neustrian king before those proceedings ended; Venantius Fortunatus *Carmen* 9.1; Brennan, "Image of Frankish Kings," 6; George, "Poet as Politician."

3 Halsall, "Nero and Herod?" 340, contends that Leudast and the clergy at Tours were "the real threat" for Gregory, not Chilperic's trial. Gregory recounted that after Riculf was sent to the monastery he escaped and was welcomed by the bishop of Tours' nemesis, Bishop Felix of Nantes; *Historiae* 5.49. For more on the personally harrowing and headache-inducing events of 580: Van Dam, *Saints*, 70-73.

4 *Historiae* 7.22. Fortunately for Gregory, when Guntram actually did send Claudius on his fatal mission to remove Eberulf from Saint Martin's church, on which occasion the basilica's denizens let loose a bloodbath on both men's toughs, the bishop happened to be visiting a manor some 48 kilometers distant from the city; *Historiae* 7.29.

5 *Historiae* 8.14.

6 *Historiae* 10.30. Neither did Gregory voice concern for his own wellbeing in regards to four instances when armies marched on the Touraine after 577; however, substantial numbers of rural Tourangeaux may have died during some of these episodes. In 583 one of Chilperic's armies

Historiae. Perhaps it was not long after Gregory put this tale to paper that he had one more confrontation with Death; this time the bishop's persistent foe finally claimed its quarry, on 17 November, most likely in 594.[7] As has been mentioned, most of Gregory's books remained unfinished upon his expiration. Among several issues left unresolved by virtue of the author's demise were the fates of Queen Fredegund and King Guntram and how the author wanted to close out the *Historiae*.

Killer Queen(s)

In no other instance did Gregory's personal moral convictions coincide with Austrasian political policy as they did with regards to Queen Fredegund. Sigibert and his wife had held that queen responsible for the demise of Brunhild's sister, Chilperic's bride Galswinth, since the latter's murder

burned, pillaged, and murdered as they passed through the region; *Historiae* 6.31. Following Chilperic's death in 584, a levy from Bourges torched rural buildings in order to intimidate the Tourangeaux into submitting their city to Guntram's control; *Historiae* 4.12. Levies of men from Orléans and Bourges attacked rural churches in the Touraine in 585 as they marched through the region towards Poitou; *Historiae* 7.24. Finally, in 590 an army returning from Brittany pillaged in the district; *Historiae* 10.9.

7 For the date, see *PLRE* 3A, 548, s. v., "Georgius Florentius Gregorius (Gregory of Tours) 3." In 590 Gregory finished a seventeen-year rebuilding project on the cathedral at Tours, which a fire had destroyed around 560; *Historiae* 10.31. Fortunatus provided the *tituli*, brief verse inscriptions, which were painted on the walls to match a series of images that depicted Martin's miracles; Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmen* 10.6. Brian Brennan suggested that San Vitale in Ravenna, with which Fortunatus would have been familiar, likely provided a model for the imagery painted above the Tours cathedral's altar; Brennan, "Text and Image," 80. Christ would be enthroned in glory. Saint Martin would stand to the left, officiating at a mass with a flame of fire floating above his head and a jeweled arm, the images drawn from Sulpicius Severus's writings; *Dialogi* 2.2.1-2, 3.10.6; Brennan, "Text and Image," 78-80. To the right would be pictured Gregory, holding a model of the church, symbolizing the bishop as donor; ibid., 80-81. The last line of the *titulum* reads: "By the aid of Martin Gregory has brought to completion this church, and that new man has restored what the former man was"; *Carmen* 10.6.17-18; trans. by Roberts, *Poems*, 657. The image did not simply assert; rather, it testified to Gregory's "inherited status as *successor Martini*"; Brennan, "Text and Image," 83. For the first of two sets of *tituli* being the one that actually appeared on the walls: Roberts, *Humblest Sparrow*, 189-99.

Our author claimed that before the church was finished, he discovered relics of the Theban Legion, along with other saints, in Martin's basilica. These had been housed in the cathedral initially, but they had been miraculously relocated prior to the fire. Gregory rededicated the cathedral with the newly found relics. As was mentioned, when in 591 the plague struck Tours, after which the bishop instituted Rogations, the contagion vanished; *Historiae* 9.30. This anecdote suggests that in the early 590s the guaranteed power of the saints was as responsive to the *confisus* bishop's requests as they ever had been. Here was a holy man prepared to meet his Maker.

around 570.[8] Shortly following Chilperic's assassination in 584, Childebert II sent envoys to request that King Guntram hand Fredegund over to his custody so she could be held to account for her crimes, and as late as 591 Childebert's court was denouncing Guntram's decision to participate in the baptism of the Neustrian queen's supposed son by Chilperic, Chlothar II.[9] Gregory did his part to cause readers of the *Historiae* to doubt Chlothar's paternity.[10] Otherwise, he made it plain that he believed Fredegund was utterly wicked by implying she was an adulterer, a murderer, and an impious witch.[11] The writer's literary assassination of the woman's character was thorough; he depicted the queen as odious towards subordinates; uncaring about her family members; and hateful towards clerics, a trait which Gregory deemed she shared with her husband.[12] So murderous was Fredegund in Gregory's estimation, her stepchildren, and even her own children, numbered among the intended victims. Given the frequency of internecine struggles over the several Merovingian thrones, Fredegund's designs against her two adult stepsons, Merovech and Clovis, seem reasonable, for had either succeeded their father, he likely would have extinguished the lives of the queen and her own offspring by Chilperic. In 576 Fredegund reportedly convinced Duke Guntram Boso to lure his fellow asylum seeker, the rebel prince Merovech, into the countryside outside Tours where the latter could be cut down.[13] Although that effort failed, Merovech eventually did fall in 578 in an ambush near Reims. Gregory pointed out how some suspected the queen had convinced the Austrasians, Guntram Boso and Bishop Aegidius of Reims, to orchestrate the assassination.[14] He similarly recounted that in 580 Fredegund convinced her husband to send Prince Clovis to Berny while an epidemic of dysentery raged there. When that ploy failed, Clovis was called

8 *Historiae* 4.28.

9 *Historiae* 7.14, 10.28.

10 Dailey, "Gregory of Tours."

11 Adultery: *Historiae* 7.21, 8.31; murder: e. g., *Historiae* 4.51, 5.39, 10.27; witchcraft: *Historiae* 7.41, 8.29, 8.31; Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 136-37.

12 Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 121-36. About those in Fredegund's service, Gregory related that when the marriage train of the queen's daughter was despoiled in the immediate aftermath of Chilperic's assassination, she caused the kitchen staff that returned from the failed journey to be stripped, flogged, and imprisoned. Fredegund treated an *ex-domesticus* who delivered her the bad news about the convoy little better; he was stripped and even deprived of the baldric he had been presented for honorable service rendered to the king; *Historiae* 7.15; Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 128.

13 *Historiae* 5.14.

14 *Historiae* 5.18. Guntram Boso and Aegidius had been partners in the Gundovald Affair. Aegidius was chief architect of the momentary Neustrian-Austrasian alliance. It seems likely that Fredegund worked with the bishop to bring about Merovech's downfall.

to join Chilperic at a manor near Paris. There Fredegund convinced the king that Clovis's consort's mother had used magic to kill the royal couple's two young sons earlier in the year. Soon after the prince was discovered stabbed to death.[15] Less calculating was Fredegund's alleged attempt to kill her own newborn, Samson, in 575 during the harrowing ordeal when Chilperic and his family were hiding inside the walls of Tournai awaiting Sigibert's army to attack.[16] A late effort to terminate one of her own occurred in 589 when, during one of Fredegund's many physical altercations with her daughter Rigunth, the queen slammed the lid of a chest on the young woman and nearly succeeded in doing her in.[17]

As for the queen's abuses of God's ecclesiastics, the worst instance Gregory recorded was her mistreatment of Bishop Praetextatus of Rouen, who had jeopardized Fredegund's political standing in 576 by presiding over the marriage of the queen's stepson Merovech to Queen Brunhild following Sigibert's death.[18] At Praetextatus's trial in 577 Fredegund reportedly bribed some of the assembled bishops (but not Gregory) to trick Praetextatus into admitting he had conspired to kill Chilperic, causing him to think he would receive a lenient penalty. As it happened the king exiled the prelate, but years later King Guntram restored Praetextatus to his episcopal seat.[19] Shortly after this, however, Fredegund, according to Gregory, sent an assassin who stabbed the bishop as he stood at the cathedral's altar on Easter Sunday, 586. When the dying prelate lingered, the queen reportedly rushed to his deathbed, ostensibly to assure him justice would be done and to offer the care of her own physicians. Praetextatus saw through the queen's lies and died shortly thereafter.[20]

In addition to providing copious details to establish how Fredegund was a *mala regina*, Gregory several times employed direct speech to calumniate

15 *Historiae* 5.39.

16 Samson was Fredegund's first son by Chilperic. The infant was born while the family was hiding at Tournai. When the newborn contracted dysentery, the queen reportedly spurned him, perhaps to avoid catching the malady herself, and she reportedly even tried to have him killed until her husband forced her to relent; *Historiae* 5.22. Fredegund had the infant baptized after her husband chided her, but Samson expired a couple of years later. Cf. Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 133.

17 *Historiae* 9.34. A servant rescued Rigunth. Gregory apparently felt sympathy for the queen's daughter, who had fasted on the bishop's behalf during his trial at Berny in 580; *Historiae* 5.49.

18 On Fredegund and Praetextatus: Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 121-24.

19 *Historiae* 5.18.

20 *Historiae* 8.31. Paul Fouracre examined the cases of eighteen bishops murdered in Gaul between 580 and 745. He attributed a spike in killings in this time and place primarily to the bishops' power and struggles involving that power; Fouracre, "Why Were So Many Bishops Killed."

the woman's character. I contend that the writer did this while expecting to outlive the queen, intending to describe her death and intimate her damnation in the *Historiae*. For example, he caused Austrasian envoys speaking on King Childebert II's behalf to declare that the queen was responsible not only for the deaths of Galswinth, Merovech, and Clovis, but also for the assassinations of Sigibert and Chilperic.[21] He portrayed the saintly King Guntram referring to Fredegund as an *inimica Dei atque hominum*.[22] Gregory depicted how one among the Frankish devotees of the deceased Praetextatus called upon God to mete swift vengeance on the queen for spilling the bishop's innocent blood.[23] Most importantly, however, Gregory represented Bishop Praetextatus himself, as he lingered prior to fulfillment of his Easter martyrdom, prophetically addressing the queen, as follows: "… you will not always enjoy royal power. With God's help I came back from exile to the kingdom; but when you are taken from the kingdom *you will be plunged into the abyss* (*demergeris in abyssum*)."[24] Gregory did not employ direct discourse, especially that which he put into the mouth of a saint, simply for hollow rhetorical effect. By these words the author earnestly caused the soon-to-be-martyr to foretell how the queen would be removed from power and would proceed to hell.[25] Praetextatus's damning prophecy interestingly contrasts with yet another speech located three books prior in the *Historiae* in which Fredegund herself predicted that by burning the lists for taxes she and Chilperic had planned to impose on their cities the couple would "evade a perpetual penalty" (*poenam perpetuam evadamus*).[26]

21 *Historiae* 7.7.

22 *Historiae* 9.20.

23 *Historiae* 8.31. Gregory next recounted how the queen afterwards served the same Frank a drink and poisoned him to death. Following this, Bishop Leudovald of Bayeux investigated. Some confessed under torture that Fredegund was responsible for the crime. Leudovald led other bishops in imposing an interdict on Rouen's churches. The queen reportedly tried to have him killed, too, but Leudovald was surrounded with sufficient muscle to protect him. For Gregory's associations of Fredegund with witchcraft and sacrilege: Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 136-39.

24 *Historiae* 8.31; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 462, with my italics.

25 Gregory furthermore caused Praetextatus to tell Fredegund: "It would be better for you to abandon your stupid, malicious behaviour, and to turn your mind to higher things. If you were to give up the boastful pride which burns within you, you might gain eternal life (*tu vitam adipisceris aeternam*) and bring up to man's estate this young boy whose mother you are"; *Historiae* 8.31; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 462. Praetextatus's first sentence to the queen gives advice Gregory would have given to any wicked individual. The second sentence refers to two matters which, Gregory wanted to make obvious to readers, were never going to happen; Fredegund would neither relinquish her pride nor gain eternal life.

26 *Historiae* 5.34. Gregory intended Fredegund's speech to maximize the irony, not to portray the queen in a sympathetic light; *contra* Halsall, "Nero and Herod?" 342.

Gregory undoubtedly intended his audience to read these words suggestive of the queen's salvation with utmost irony.[27] What one may conclude from these several uses of direct speech in regards to Fredegund is that late into his writing endeavor the bishop was anticipating the queen to fall politically and to die as per Praetextatus's prediction. This was a very real possibility between 585 and 594 when the queen's authority was entirely reliant on the survival of Chlothar II, aged zero to ten years during that interim, whose legitimacy Gregory and the Austrasians were seeking to undermine.[28] The presentation of Praetextatus's pronouncement on Fredegund's fate also reveals how, at least in this one instance, our author was willing to trust in the veracity of a contemporary ecclesiastic's prophecy about a person's hereafter condition, and even to put it on paper although the subject was not yet expired.[29] Gregory interpreted Praetextatus's utterance as proof of the unredeemable point to which Fredegund's crimes had borne her, and as a guarantee of the forthcoming loss of her soul.[30]

If Gregory made Fredegund's transgressions stand out, largely hidden from his pages were the overtly worldly actions of Queen Brunhild. Undoubtedly the Austrasian queen was every bit the political force to be reckoned with as was her Neustrian counterpart.[31] It was the writer's literary intention to provide enough information about Brunhild to make it appear she was an opposite of Fredegund.[32] For example, whereas he recounted how the latter tried to strangle her own daughter, he depicted Brunhild desperately attempting to recover her own issue, Princess Ingund, from captivity in North Africa. And whereas Fredegund was shown ready to dispense with her own agents, Brunhild reportedly once placed herself between two armies and negotiated a peace in order to save the life of a favored *dux*.[33] Gregory's

27 Gregory caused Fredegund to admit that her momentary contrition had come "too late" (*sero*) to save her sons. He also expected readers to think the effort was too little to save herself; cf. Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 134.

28 Fredegund's survival following Chilperic's death also depended on her maintaining Guntram's support. The queen was fortunate that the old king decided to hold Neustria as a protectorate during the prince's minority; Dailey, "Gregory of Tours," 5-7. Guntram's death in 592 may have renewed Gregory's hopes that Neustrian magnates, upon Fredegund's demise, would reject the circumspect prince and transfer their allegiance to King Childebert II.

29 Cf. Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 134: "This passage was designed to show that Fredegund was beyond God's mercy. No matter what belated, half-hearted acts of penitence she might conjure on her own behalf, her sins were unforgiveable, her soul unredeemable."

30 Fredegund died in 597; Fredegar, *Chronica* 4.17.

31 On Brunhild: Nelson, "Queens as Jezebels" 39-45; Kurth, *Études franques*, 1: 265-356; Dumézil, *La reine Brunehaut*.

32 Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 118.

33 Ibid., 128-36.

respect for Brunhild need not be doubted. The author portrayed her as the ideal royal bride; he described her as elegant, charming, honorable, wise and pleasant. She provided a stark contrast to most from her generation of Merovingian brides, who our author thought were "unworthy" (*indignas*) and chosen from low social ranks "out of cheapness" (*per vilitatem*), like the former slave Fredegund.[34]

However, while Gregory's respect for the lady is not in question, a greater difficulty arises in determining whether or not he had reason to fear Brunhild during his final decade of life when Tours rested under the governance of Childebert II and his mother.[35] Historical commentators writing in Gregory's wake attributed more forceful and nefarious qualities to Brunhild than did their predecessor. For example, Fredegar's *Chronica* and the *Liber historiae Francorum* both reported how the queen connived to initiate a war between her two grandsons.[36] Fredegar blamed Brunhild for the murder of Bishop Desiderius of Vienne as did two hagiographers.[37] Furthermore, just as Gregory had depicted Childebert II holding Fredegund responsible for five Merovingians' murders, Fredegar caused Chlothar II to proclaim that Brunhild was guilty of causing the deaths of ten Frankish kings.[38] But even Gregory's pages were not entirely devoid of critical considerations about Brunhild. For example, in a chapter of the *Historiae* which depicts King Guntram regaling an assemblage of bishops with the tale of Childebert's divinely determined birth on an Easter Sunday, the author oddly added that the old monarch also informed the prelates how Brunhild once threatened to murder him, but the Lord delivered him from the queen's traps (*insidiis*).[39] This was a peculiar way to end a chapter devoted to a king giving praise to another. Perhaps Gregory wished to share an honest rendition of Guntram's public musings in 585 about his royal relatives, Brunhild included. This speech was given at the same banquet at which Gregory and Guntram traded accounts of their dreams signifying Chilperic's damnation. The writer may have felt that in the event Brunhild

34 *Historiae* 4.27. For Gregory's contrast of Brunhild and Fredegund as brides: Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 94-96.

35 After Chilperic's assassination in 584 King Guntram controlled Tours for almost a year. The old king restored Tours to Childebert II's Austrasian realm in 585; *Historiae* 7.33.

36 Fredegar, *Chronica* 4.27; *Liber historiae Francorum* 38.

37 Fredegar, *Chronica* 4.32; Sisebut, *Vita vel passio sancti Desiderii* 15-18; *Passio sancti Desiderii episcopi et martyris* 9.

38 Fredegar, *Chronica* 4.42. Fredegar similarly accused Brunhild of encompassing Chilperic's assassination, just as Gregory blamed Fredegund for Sigibert's death; Fredegar, *Chronica* 3.93; *Historiae* 4.51.

39 *Historiae* 8.4.

should ever see the lines about her and disapprove, he could cover himself by claiming he was merely citing the king's words. Elsewhere, Gregory similarly related how Guntram in 589 publicly declared that Brunhild previously planned to marry the pretender Gundovald and afterwards she was considering wedding the latter's son. Brunhild would have known of the king's suspicions and accusations in this case, for Gregory reported that she swore oaths to disprove the accusations.[40]

Our author's least flattering consideration of Brunhild is to be found in a three-chapter spool in *Historiae* 6 in which the queen comes across negatively compared with King Guntram. At *Historiae* 6.37 Gregory recounted how Abbot Lupentius of Javols, after clearing himself of an accusation that he had spoken treasonably about Brunhild, was decapitated by Count Innocentius, who tossed the parts into a river. The miraculous recovery of the abbot's body and head followed by the occurrence of miracles at the man's tomb testified to Lupentius's sanctity.[41] At *Historiae* 6.38 the writer next detailed how Innocentius acquired the episcopal seat at Rodez with Brunhild's aid. But even as a bishop Innocentius persisted in wicked ways, such as when he tried to take properties held by the bishop of Cahors. Finally, at *Historiae* 6.39 Gregory related how King Guntram ignored the many candidates for the bishopric of Bourges who wished to purchase the see and instead selected a honorable and literarily talented man of senatorial family, Sulpicius, for the position. Gregory then identified Sulpicius as the bishop who had presided over a synod that resolved the long-lasting property dispute between Rodez and Cahors by ruling against the disreputable Innocentius.[42] Although

40 Guntram's accusation of Brunhild intending to marry Gundovald happened after his men seized the queen's agent Ebregisel while he was delivering precious gifts to the Visigothic king, Reccared. Guntram suspected that Brunhild was sending the presents to Gundovald's sons, who were living in Spain; *Historiae* 9.28. After the defeat of Guntram's army in Septimania, he again closed the roads between his and Childebert's realms. It was at that point that the old king declared his suspicion that Brunhild wished to marry one of Gundovald's sons; *Historiae* 9.32. Goffart, *Narrators*, 178-79, characterized the latter accusation as an example of Gregory's ironic humor and attributed the anecdote to the writer intending to ridicule Guntram. Alternatively, for claims that Brunhild did invite Gundovald to Gaul and intended to marry him: Zuckerman, "Qui a rappelé," 7; Reimitz, "True Differences," 20.

41 Innocentius weighed down the body with stones and put the head in a bag with rocks before disposing of them in a river. Shepherds found the unidentifiable body, and as they were preparing to bury it, an eagle retrieved the bag and dropped it before them, enabling the abbot's identity to become known. The posthumous miracles included a glowing light over the tomb and cures of illnesses; *Historiae* 6.37.

42 Cahors had been presented to Galswinth during her brief marriage to Chilperic, and Brunhild claimed the city after her sister's demise; Nelson, "Queens as Jezebels," 53. Guntram controlled Cahors after Chilperic's death. He restored it to Brunhild in 587 as part of the Treaty of Andelot,

he never intended to vilify Brunhild in the *Historiae*, these chapters show that Gregory was willing to indirectly slight the queen, such as by bringing attention to her support for an unworthy episcopal candidate in contrast to Guntram's exemplary selection.[43] The part he caused Brunhild to play in this triad of tales reveals that even she was not fully immune to the writer's variable portrayals of contemporary Merovingians and their maneuverings.

Another potentially sensitive issue over which Gregory may have worried how the queen would receive it was the assessment of Brunhild's first husband's fate. As was addressed in the previous chapter, Gregory intimated to readers his estimation of Sigibert's eternal condemnation by three times employing the term *exitus* in reference to the ruler's demise. In so doing he forewent using the more obvious condemning term *interitus* to characterize Sigibert's expiration in the various calculations of years. Perhaps by deploying the less common word Gregory intended to leave himself the ability to brush off any pointed accusation of him maliciously damning the king by countering that he did that with the term *interitus*. *Exitus*, he could argue, only meant a this-worldly departure. But one recalls that Gregory did characterize Sigibert's death with the telling words, *iudicio Dei interiens*, not as reportage but coming from the mouth of King Guntram.[44] Here again, just maybe Gregory embedded these judgments in direct discourse in order to shunt the onus onto the king should it ever happen that Brunhild were to take offense to a remark implying her husband's damnation. Otherwise, considering how Childebert's court was rent by factions, it is equally plausible that Gregory put the condemning words about Sigibert's fate in Guntram's speech in the event that some ambitious or malicious courtier should try to make hay out of this component of his written effort to direct Frankish royals towards the paths of righteousness.[45] Maybe the author was no more worried about what Brunhild thought about his reasoned assessment of her husband's lost soul than he was about the queen's opinion of him marginally insulting her for having lent support to make a bishop out of an undeserving cad like Innocentius. Whether or not Gregory played it safe with the four references intimating Sigibert's eternal fate, I suspect he was

arranged between him and Childebert II; *Historiae* 9.20. The effort Innocentius made to acquire territories from Cahors will have been conducted on Brunhild's behalf. On the hidden context behind the contents of *Historiae* 6.37-39, and the dating of the chapters' composition to approximately 587 to 591: Murray, "Chronology," 182-85.

43 *Pace* Murray, ibid., 93 n. 70, but Gregory did not mean to imply Brunhild was complicit in the abbot's murder. Cf. Dailey, *Queens, Consorts, Concubines*, 126.

44 *Historiae* 7.6.

45 For writings produced as evidence at the trials of bishops: *Historiae* 6.22, 10.19.

fully assuming around 592 to 594 that Brunhild would number among the royals to whom he would present the finished *Historiae*. Because the queen was perhaps some twelve years younger than he, Gregory may have figured that at approximately forty-four years of age in 594 she likely could expect to live a couple of more decades, which in fact she nearly did.[46] While Gregory was eagerly anticipating Fredegund's fall, as he had been since 586, and as he inched ever closer to completing the *Historiae*, he probably suspected more and more that Brunhild with her son and grandsons would be a beneficiary of his historically-based moral advice manual, not a character to be eulogized towards the end of the work.[47]

King Guntram and Gregory's Unfinished Project

Because Death denied Gregory a completed corpus, scholars continue to differ on what remained for the writer to accomplish. Three of the unfinished hagiographical works exhibit the obligatory multiple-of-ten component to them: 50 chapters for *VSJ*, 110 chapters for *GC*, and 20 *vitae* for *VP*.[48] But *VSJ* still required some editing: among other issues, one *capitulum* indicates a *caecus* for a tale about a *caeca*, and another announces the *interitus* of men who stole vessels from Julian's basilica while the narrative fails to show the martyr meting the fatalities.[49] As for other books, Danuta Shanzer has

46 Brunhild died of unnatural causes in 613. According to the chronicler Fredegar, upon Childebert II's untimely death in 596, the queen's two grandsons divided the kingdom. Theudebert ruled Austrasia while Theuderic received Burgundy; Fredegar, *Chronica* 4.16. Theudebert exiled his grandmother from Austrasia in 599. The queen was welcomed at Burgundy, and from there she promoted a war between the grandsons; *Chronica* 4.19. The brothers' cousin Chlothar II took advantage of the divide. In 612 Theuderic twice defeated his brother Theudebert in battle, after which he ordered the loser's assassination; *Chronica*, 4.38. The following year Theuderic II died of dysentery; *Chronica* 4.39. Brunhild with a great-grandson warred against Chlothar II and the latter prevailed; *Chronica* 4.42. On the order of the victorious king, Brunhild was tortured for three days. Finally, she was paraded before the troops, her limbs were tied to ropes and a wild horse trampled her to pieces; *Chronica*, 4.42. On the startling turn of events and Chlothar's ascendency: Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 140-44.

47 Murray, "Composition," 81 n. 48, envisions the Austrasian house as the intended audience for *Historiae* 5 prologue.

48 Additionally, while narrative chapters in the individual *vitae* range from one to twelve, the total number for the *VP* is 90. I checked, as I was curious to see if they numbered 100. Still, an interesting multiple of ten.

49 *VSJ* 8, 38; with Shanzer, "So Many Saints," 35. One should be similarly suspicious about the state of *VSJ* 14 with its mention of Saint Julian intending to restore ownership of a villa taken from the church by Duke Sigivald left unfulfilled. *MA* is considered complete because it has a

identified many lines, especially in *GM* and *GC*, that constitute directions, personal notes and more, the likes of which Gregory did not leave behind in his completed books, *VSM* 1-3 and *MA*.[50] *VP* is probably the closest to complete of the unfinished books. Also unfinished were *GM* at 106 chapters and *VSM* 4 at 47. But I wonder, did Gregory intend to stop *GM* and *GC* at 110 chapters apiece? Where's the glory intended for the divinity in a not-so-round 220 chapters? Might Gregory have intended to extend each of these books to 150 for an even 300 chapters, 100 per person of the Trinity? Likewise, *VSM* 3 and 4 already number 107 chapters, seven beyond an appropriate complement to the 100 chapters of *VSM* 1 and 2. Could it be that Gregory in the early 590s was envisioning ending *VSM* 4 and beginning a *VSM* 5, by which he could bring the total chapters for *VSM* up to a well-rounded 300 chapters as well? Should we really believe that had Gregory lived an additional ten years longer than he did, he would have stopped chronicling Martin's miracles at four books, eschewing coverage of wonders the confessor continued to produce after 592?

I speculate on all of this mainly to bring us back to the *Historiae*. It has been noted that Gregory composed *Historiae* 10.31 with its list of accomplishments for the bishops of Tours and a final computation of years from Creation to 593 in anticipation of completing the unfinished work.[51] Martin Heinzelmann has conjectured that Gregory provided an incomplete list of his books in that chapter in order to arrive at the number twenty – "ten books of this *History*, seven books of *Miracles*, and one on the *Life of the Fathers*, a book of *Commentaries on the Psalms* [and] a book on the *Offices of the Church*"[52] – and thereby to liken his corpus to that of Eusebius of Caesarea.[53] Whatever the merits of that theory, the final order of his books was not definitively settled, as evidenced by the slight differences between the list at *Historiae* 10.31 and another at *GC* preface.[54]

conclusion and has been polished. Its table of contents, however, includes two chapter headings for which there are no narratives. The list of *capitula*, therefore, displays a total of 40 chapters, another multiple of ten. See Krusch, ed., *MGH* SRM 1.2, 377.

50 Shanzer, "So Many Saints," 41-43. Three *capitula* survive for the *GC* for which the contents do not. It seems more likely that Gregory had yet to write the narratives than that they have been lost. The chapters are entitled: *De Tetrico episcopo*, *De sancto Orientio episcopo*, *De Quiteria virgine*; *GC* 105-07.

51 Shaw, "Chronology," 135-38.

52 *Historiae* 10.31; trans. based on Thorpe, *History*, 602-03.

53 Heinzelmann, "Works of Gregory," 284-85.

54 The list of twenty books at *GC*'s general preface matches the order of the books in the manuscript tradition and seems to reflect more accurately than the list at *Historiae* 10.31 how Gregory envisioned arranging them when he died; Shaw, "Chronology," 107.

Furthermore, it does not appear Gregory had begun editorial revisions, much less putting polish to the history.[55] Now that Alexander Murray has revealed that the writer was still penning material even for the early books of that work during the 590s, one wonders, how much more was there to go?[56] Could Gregory have been contemplating making each of the *decem libri Historiarum* fifty chapters long? Doing so would have meant adding fifty-eight more chapters (nineteen of these in *Historiae* 10 alone), with one too many chapters requiring a downward adjustment for *Historiae* 4. Actually, with a little creative work on the *capitula* Gregory could have cut that number down to twenty chapters in no time flat. The writer's death precludes us ever knowing the final number of chapters he wished the tome of history to contain.[57]

But how to end the *Historiae*? Or more specifically, what role, if any, did Gregory have in mind for King Guntram in the last book of that work? As addressed in the previous chapter, Guntram was deceased as of March 592 and with reports of miracles now swirling around his entombed person, ending the tome with a chapter on the ruler's death and salvation was a distinct possibility.[58] Alexander Murray has ascertained through close attention to Gregory's verb tenses that the author composed the chapter relating Guntram's miracles subsequent to the king's demise.[59] In so doing the scholar characterizes the chapter in question as an obituary.[60] It would be more accurate to describe it as an anticipatory chapter designed to prime readers for a forthcoming obituary chapter, at which the person's eternal fate could be announced through the *capitulum* or intimated in the

55 E. g., Murray, "Composition," 92, suggests Gregory "was hardly finished tinkering with his text when he died in 594…" Two issues that Roger Collins has identified as still requiring editing were Gregory's multiple descriptions of Reccared's Visigothic embassy in 587 at *Historiae* 9.1 and *Historiae* 9.16, and his inclusion of two outlines of Hermenegild's revolt in Spain; Collins, "Gregory of Tours," 502.

56 For Gregory's death cutting short *Historiae* 10: Pietri, *La ville de Tours*, 609.

57 It seems that as of 594 Gregory was close enough to finished to compose the work's ending, but far enough from finished that he still had more narratives to pen, with very much editing to follow. Alternatively, see Bourgain, "Works of Gregory," 143, who writes: "These works were finished, or almost finished, at Gregory's death; they may have been in course of clean copying…"

58 Murray, "Composition," 85 n. 56, writes that the *Histoire litéraire de la France*, vol. 3 (Paris, 1735), 377, claimed Gregory ended the *Historiae* with Guntram's death. I have been unable to obtain that work.

59 Murray, "Chronology," 171-72 n. 47; idem, "Composition," 86. For more on past tense verbs as indicators that individuals already were dead when Gregory wrote about their characters: Murray, "Chronology," 171-74, 178; idem, "Composition," 91.

60 Ibid., 86.

narrative.[61] *Historiae* 9.21 on Guntram's *elymosina et bonitas* corresponds with *Historiae* 3.25, *De bonitate Theudoberthi*, which sets up *Historiae* 3.36, in which Gregory recorded how King Theudebert died and God summoned him (i. e., called his soul to heaven). Additionally, the chapter on Guntram's goodness corresponds inversely with *Historiae* 4.16 on Chramn's *levitas et malitia*, *Historiae* 5.3 on Rauching's *malitia*, *Historiae* 5.48 on Leudast's *malitia*, *Historiae* 7.15 on Fredegund's *malitia*, *Historiae* 7.22 on Eberulf's *malitia*, and *Historiae* 10.12 on Berthegund's *malitia*. Gregory composed chapters entitled *De interitu* "N" for Chramn, Rauching, Leudast, and Eberulf. A chapter to be titled *De interitu Fredegundis* was forthcoming, and apparently so was one to be called *De interitu Bertegundis*.[62]

61 Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 69-71, does not think Gregory intended to write a chapter relating Guntram's death. He reasons that Gregory intended *Historiae* 9.21 to represent the conclusion to the Guntram theme of *Historiae* 7 to 9. But Guntram features in seven of the twenty-nine narrative chapters of *Historiae* 10, not counting one chapter with regnal dating according to the king. Obviously Guntram was still relevant to Gregory's narrative and literary purpose in the tenth book.

62 According to our author, Berthegund abandoned her husband and entered her mother Ingitrudis' convent at Tours, until Gregory himself convinced her to return to her mate; *Historiae* 9.33. A few years later, however, Berthegund again left her husband, took the couple's movables, and moved in with her brother, Bishop Bertram of Bordeaux. This time the spouse appealed to King Guntram, who demanded that Bertram restore his sister to her husband. Bertram, however, secretly gave his sibling different advice, and she donned the clothes of a religious and took a vow of penance (*veste mutata ac penetentiam accepta*). Because she did so, the forsaken husband was unable to retrieve his wife from the church. After her brother died, Berthegund moved to Poitiers, and then she and her mother began arguing over the patrimony of the latter's late husband. This dispute lasted for years, but in the end Berthegund petitioned King Childebert following her mother's decease in 590, thereby acquiring her parents' wealth, including the convent at Tours; *Historiae* 10.12. Now in control of the latter, instead of operating it Berthegund completely gutted the convent her mother had founded, and she ordered thugs to steal crops from the estates which the faithful had bequeathed to the institution. Gregory obviously would have judged Berthegund's soul unredeemable by virtue of the malicious actions she perpetrated late in her life. Since, according to the writer, Ingitrudis was around eighty when she died in 590, the daughter likely was sixty or older in that year; *Historiae* 10.12. When Gregory introduced the latter in the first chapter on this mother-daughter spat, he initially characterized Berthegund as follows: "She was given to gluttony and sleeping (*Erat enim gulae et somno dedita*), having no care for the service of God"; *Historiae* 9.33. The past tense verb exhibited in this passage, *Erat*, indicates that the writer penned this assessment of the woman's character after her death. (Compare Murray, *Chronology*, 171-72 n. 47 on Guntram.) Therefore, he must have composed both chapters concerning Ingitrudis' and Berthegund's feud following both their deceases. While Gregory alluded to the mother's demise in the second chapter, devoted to confirming Berthegund's *malitia*, a chapter dedicated to recounting the wicked daughter's death, and announcing her fate, was yet to be written. This is a tale to which Gregory certainly intended to return.

So, was Gregory going to end the *Historiae* with a positive example for royal fates or a negative one?[63] This simply cannot be known for certain. For the final five full years that the author covered events in the *Historiae*, years eleven to fifteen of Childebert II's reign (roughly 586 to 590; *Historiae* 8.38 to 10.23), he penned an average of 12.25 chapters per year. At that pace he may have estimated situating a chapter titled *De obitu Gunthchramni*, dating early in Childebert's seventeenth year, around *Historiae* 10.38. This would leave the writer only eleven shy of an even fifty chapters for *Historiae* 10, if in fact he wished to go the fully divine decimal route. Because he was still waiting for God and His saints to eliminate Fredegund, Gregory probably was not planning to tamper with the chronological order by putting the saintly deceased king's real obituary after that of the wicked queen. At any rate, because Gregory apparently intended to conclude the last book with the list of bishops, computation of years and all else that presently stands as *Historiae* 10.31, I rather suspect he was not particularly dead set on finalizing the tenth book's narrative with a chapter on Guntram's decease.[64]

Of course, ending *Historiae* 10 with Guntram's *obitus*, or *transitus*, would have provided a neat contrast to the end of *Historiae* 6 with Chilperic's *interitus*. But it is far from clear that Gregory intended to organize the latter books of the *Historiae* around a tidy contrast between the *malus rex* Chilperic and *bonus rex* Guntram.[65] Chilperic's negative example had its lessons for royals seeking to avoid damnation, to be sure; however, the many

63 Would Gregory have gone so far as to entitle Guntram's obituary chapter *De transitu Gunthchramni*? He only announced an individual's *transitus* in a chapter heading for three saints: Anthony of Egypt, Martin of Tours, and, for some unknown reason, Ferreolus of Uzes; *Historiae* 1.38, 1.48, 6.7. Using *De transitu* to denote the death of what was presumably to be the last saint's death considered in the *Historiae* would have echoed the *capitulum* for Martin's "passing" at the end of the work's first book, and so it would have supplied a touch of symmetry. I am not inclined to imagine Gregory would have done this, however, as he did not use *De transitu* for the chapter heading announcing Aredius of Limoges's death at *Historiae* 10.29.

64 Murray, "Composition," 85, posits that Gregory would not have ended the *Historiae* with Guntram's death because the latter was not an Austrasian, and it would not have fit with the "Austrasian structure to the *Historiae*." To this one may counter that Guntram had been Childebert II's adoptive father since 577; *Historiae* 5.17. Furthermore, Gregory sometimes included Guntram alongside Childebert in his ostensibly Austrasian regnal dates for introducing new years, and this includes the late year, 591; *Historiae* 5.25, 5.27, 6.14, 10.24. Gregory additionally dated two events according to the year of Guntram's reign; *Historiae* 7.1, 10.10. Also, the fact that Childebert II ruled Burgundy in addition to Austrasia as of 592 meant that the Burgundian story, including the aspect of Childebert's predecessor and surrogate father, had now been subsumed into the Austrasian story.

65 Shanzer, "Review Article," 255, asserts that a lack of a chapter on Guntram's *obitus* calls into question Heinzelmann's theory that *Historiae* 7 to 9 constitute a good king trilogy. See also Halsall, "Nero and Herod?" 344.

insights, not only about the fates of deceased Frankish rulers, but about how Merovingian kings should properly conduct themselves in relation to God's bishops, churches and saints, rise above what only a study of Chilperic could offer. As Gregory recorded, by the early 590s God had steered Childebert II and his family beyond the disgrace that had been the Austrasian-Neustrian alliance, through the ill-fated Gundovald fiasco, and past two royal coups. Upon Guntram's demise in 592 Childebert acquired Burgundy to go along with Austrasia. Perhaps Gregory thought it likely the king soon would add Neustria to his holdings, too, whenever God saw fit to affect Fredegund's perishing.[66] Gregory may have been anticipating that Childebert soon would become the most powerful Merovingian since Chlothar I. Unlike that formidable but ultimately lost soul, however, Childebert would have access to a useful tome to teach him the true method for a king to maintain, and even expand, a Christian realm.[67] Towards that end, one piece of advice Gregory shared through Guntram's speech pertains to the conduct of armies while at war. As the saint-king said, the generals must respect God's bishops, churches, and saints while they campaign. If they did that, and if the generals in turn could cause their rank and file to act likewise, victory would be assured.[68] But what might Frankish victory accomplish? If Childebert could

66 This is to assume the additional step that after Fredegund expired, Neustria would somehow pass to the Austrasians. The partisan Gregory would have thought this a proper result on account of Chlothar II's illegitimacy. Some have interpreted Gregory's report of Guntram presiding over Chlothar's baptism at *Historiae* 10.28 as evidence that the bishop finally was willing to lend support to the Neustrian ruler: e. g., Reydellet, *La royalté*, 355, 359; Breukelaar, *Historiography*, 57. Breukelaar even speculated that Guntram's sponsorship of Chlothar's baptism was the event that inspired Gregory to end the *Historiae*. The scholar asserted that Gregory favored finishing the work with this symbolically unifying scene instead of an account of Guntram's death; ibid., 57-58. This ignores that Gregory closed out the chapter by recounting how Austrasian envoys were on hand to criticize Guntram's sponsorship of the baptism. Therefore, Gregory may have meant the scene to generate a sense of tension and worry; Dailey, "Gregory of Tours," 15.

67 Childebert II's sexual peccadilloes did not rise to the level of Chothar's. Childebert's first son, Theudebert, was born of a concubine in 585; *Historiae* 8.37. A second son, Theuderic, was born of the king's wife, Faileuba, in 587; *Historiae* 9.4. Faileuba's second child died soon after birth. The queen was still recuperating when she caught wind of a plot to convince King Childebert to dismiss his mother and wife from court and take another spouse. If the king did not comply, he was to be killed through witchcraft. Two of the main conspirators were Septimima, the nurse for the royal children, and her partner, Droctulf. That duo and their accomplices all took sanctuary when the plot was unearthed. Gregory depicted how King Childebert remained true to his word when he promised that he would not kill the malefactors if they abandoned sanctuary to stand trial. Septimima and Droctulf were tortured, facially disfigured and reduced to penury, but permitted to live; *Historiae* 9.38.

68 *Historiae* 8.30. Gregory provided this advice in a scene in which Guntram rebuked his dukes after the disastrous campaign in Septimania, during which the Frankish soldiers committed

only follow through on this counsel, the end would be … glorious, yes, but more importantly for Gregory, peaceful. Conceivably the king of the united Austrasian-Burgundian realm could emulate the successes of Theudebert I and subject the entire of Italy to Frankish rule, just as Gregory asserted the *magus* king once had.[69] After all, as the saintly Guntram had once reminded the bishops assembled at Orléans, it augured well for the future of the Merovingian family that Childebert was born on Easter Day.[70] But what if Childebert and his generals failed to implement Gregory's reforms?[71] Well,

atrocities. Guntram reminded the magnates of the behaviors of their forefathers. In response the dukes gave a speech in which they first extolled Guntram, echoing the qualities Gregory had been convincing readers that the king possessed, including *bonitas* and a respect for churches, bishops, and the poor. For a fuller treatment of this anecdote, which exemplifies how Gregory used scene to suggest adjustments to the royals: Rousseau, "Gregory's Kings," 224-26. In a separate chapter, Gregory depicted Guntram directly offering Childebert II another piece of advice beneficial for the realm, this given on the occasion of Theudebert's birth. The king's message to his adopted son was as follows: "Through this child [Theudebert], God … will exalt the kingdom of the Franks, if only his father will live for him and he will live for his father"; *Historiae* 8.37; trans. by Thorpe, *History*, 470. Here Gregory was pointedly reminding Childebert and his sons not to engage in civil warfare.

69 Presumably, Gregory between 587 and 589 was sharing the hopes of Childebert and Brunhild that the king's sister, Chlodosuintha, would wed Reccared, king of the Visigoths. The latter had ended a betrothal to the Neustrian princess Rigunth after her father Chilperic's demise in 584. Further enabling Reccared's betrothal to Chlodosuintha was the king's decision to convert to Catholicism in 587; *Historiae* 9.15. He then made peaceful overtures to Guntram and Childebert II, but only the latter was receptive to an alliance, as was his mother; *Historiae* 9.1, 9.16. Guntram had been planning to conquer Visigoth-controlled Septimania ever since the Gundovald threat had dissipated. On the role of marriages in the political maneuverings of the Visigoths and Franks during the 580s: Gehler-Rachůnek, "East and West." As late as 589 Brunhild was sending gifts of golden tableware to Reccared in Spain in anticipation of the royal nuptials. As it happened, the king dropped that betrothal and married a certain Baddo in the same year. Apparently, his final selection of a bride was based on a conclusion that settling domestic matters in Spain was more important than establishing leverage in Gaul against Guntram. This was especially so following a significant Visigoth victory over Guntram's army in Septimania in 589; *Historiae* 9.31; Gehler-Rachůnek, "East and West," 38-39. Still, the Visigothic switch from seeking diplomatic ties with the Neustrians to courting the Austrasians attests to a general perception that Neustria post Chilperic was in decline and the future lay with Childebert; Collins, "Gregory of Tours," 514. Such high-level negotiations between Austrasia and other newly Catholic kingdoms may have given Gregory reason to imagine Frankish Gaul could experience anew a period of prominence like those once enjoyed under Clovis and Theudebert I. But again, Gregory's personal endgame was advancing the causes of orthodoxy and peace, not extending territory per se. For an assessment that Gregory and Childebert's court evinced only a lukewarm resolve to militarily engage the Lombards in Italy, despite the Byzantines pressuring them to do so: Fox, "Language of Sixth-century," especially at 70-71.

70 *Historiae* 8.4.

71 Not boding well for the future was an Austrasian campaign into Italy in 590 in which Childebert II sent an army led by twenty dukes. Duke Audovald had not exited Gaul before he

the *Historiae* and *Miracula* were not written just for the benefit of kings. In a world *mixte confusequae*, there were countless others from the society's myriad walks who could take to heart the moral lessons to be gleaned from his many dozens of memorials of saved and damned individuals, and do what was necessary to merit their own salvation.

Afterword

In seeking to advance "Gregorian studies," hopefully future historians will further strive to examine the writer's literary techniques in such a way that does not distance him from the society in which he was a participant.[72] The field may benefit enormously from the efforts of historically-minded researchers versed in, or willing to study and become attuned to, theology, poetry, linguistics, and, as Danuta Shanzer has previously suggested, classical historiography.[73] Sporadic discoveries of Gregory's subtle methods and motives time and again attest to the author possessing a greater intellectual and literary acumen than was generally appreciated only half a century ago.[74] A case in point is Pascale Bourgain's recent consideration of how Gregory

permitted his soldiers to ravage people's lands. Other dukes similarly despoiled the regions over which they marched. Once in Italy Audovald lost one of the dukes who had been marching with him. His force advanced towards Milan and accomplished nothing. In the meantime, fourteen other dukes moving along a different route captured five fortresses. Many of this contingent's soldiers died of dysentery. The venture was not without some success, however. While the Frank army failed in its objective to capture the Lombard king, it did recover lands which King Sigibert had held before they were taken by the Lombards. Furthermore, in the campaign's aftermath the Lombards sent envoys who made overtures for peace with both Guntram and Childebert; *Historiae* 10.3.

It is common for scholars to imagine that Gregory closed the *Historiae* in such a way as to discount hopes for political and social improvement. Goffart, *Narrators*, 185-86, interpreted Gregory's description of Childebert II's envoys voicing Austrasian objections to Guntram supporting Chlothar II's baptism in 591 as intended to imply that Merovingian politics, and society in general, would continue in their permanently flawed states. The scholar further concluded that Gregory's overall lesson was that history remained consistently the same; ibid., 208-09. I agree in general with Goffart's assessment; however, one may consider whether Gregory thought that within that flawed condition, there were times when certain kings would arise and direct their society (especially royal agents and militaries) to tread morally, thereby bringing benefit to the realm. Clovis and Theudebert I had done this, and Gregory probably hoped Childebert II and/or his heirs, armed with the many lessons from his *Historiae*, would do the same.

72 Cf. Reimitz, "True Differences," 27-28.

73 Shanzer, "Review Article," 263.

74 But for a recent estimation that Gregory's *stilo rusticiori* accurately reflects the extent of his limited literary capabilities: Tyrrell, *Merovingian Letters*, 37-42.

accentuated his opinions and drew readers' attention to meaningful events and points of interest in his text by using rhymed prose, a technique similarly employed by Fortunatus.[75] Not surprisingly, Gregory sometimes deployed this device in passages pertaining to a character's death. For example, he applied rhymed prose to highlight what he undoubtedly regarded to be one of the most monumental events depicted in his books, Saint Martin's celestial ascension:

Martinus… migravit ex hoc mu*ndo*, et nunc angeli cane*ndo* eum deferent…[76]

A full analysis of Gregory's many utilizations of rhymed prose across his entire text offers a promising direction for researchers to venture, and it potentially may indicate heretofore unknown dimensions of his literary agenda, interests, or proclivities. So might future examinations of Gregory's programmatic uses of vocabulary, and not just those regarding death.[77]

Given increased awareness of the high level of skill with which the Gallic ecclesiastical politico deployed poetic, pastoral, theological, and biblically-based literary techniques throughout his corpus, it will behoove scholars to guard against attributing the decisions of this complicated individual to preserve or omit information to singular motives, be they political, historical, literary, or theological, without giving regard to multiple possibilities. For example, my analysis based on the theme of death has forced me to reject the notion that it was some overarching theological consideration which caused Gregory to forego depicting Guntram's death in the final books of the *Historiae*. Instead the evidence leads one to conclude that historical circumstance, specifically the happenstance of the historian's own demise, is really what prevented him from composing a chapter properly relating the king's *obitus*.[78]

75 Bourgain, "Works of Gregory," 179-88. One may contrast his analysis with that of Bonnet, *Le Latin de Grégoire*, 725-26, who erred in his assertion that Gregory rarely used rhymed prose. See also Bourgain, "Works of Gregory," 176-79, for Gregory's use of parallelism, frequently associated with rhyme.

76 *VSM* 1.4, cited at Bourgain, "Works of Gregory," 179.

77 E. g., see Hope Williard's recent analysis of how Gregory employed the word *amicitia*, which reveals the writer's surprisingly ambiguous sentiments towards friendship, especially when applied in scenes about diplomacy; Williard, "Friendship and Diplomacy."

78 *Contra* Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 144-45, who asserted that Gregory omitted Guntram's death in part because his theology prevented him from depicting a "truly Christian" king governing Christian society, which would be an impossibility in this world. So what about Tiberius? Similarly, compare Goffart, *Narrators*, 184-85, who figured that Gregory left out mention of Guntram's death in the *Historiae* "to maintain an appearance of inconclusiveness" and avoid ending the text on an overly positive note.

Otherwise, I will offer two final cautionary points. First, while works lauding Gregory's doctrinal proclivities have provided a needed correction to earlier impressions that the bishop was theologically confused,[79] it is imperative that one not lose sight of the fact that social and political circumstances and personal motives definitely impacted many of the author's decisions on how to address particular topics, or whether to tackle them at all.[80] For example, ascribing Gregory's decision to waive identifying himself and other prelates who attended Bishop Aegidius of Reims' 590 treason trial to a theological effort to accentuate the typological significance of the anonymous episcopal assemblage goes too far.[81] After all, at that tribunal King Childebert II admitted written evidence datable to the era of the Austrasian-Neustrian alliance, an arrangement crafted by Aegidius and his faction, which prospered from 581 to 583. Seven to nine years later, the memory of this association was a lingering humiliation for the Austrasians. But Gregory, too, had spent much time collaborating with Chilperic, if only out of necessity, during the decade that king ruled over Tours.[82] It is no wonder, therefore, that Gregory did not note his presence at Aegidius's trial. Politics and personal reputation are two reasons, perhaps the principal ones, why Gregory disassociated himself from this trial.

A second piece of advice is that scholars heady over a resurgent image of Gregory-*qua*-theologian should take heed before subscribing to a notion that the theological underpinnings and design for much of the corpus largely rest on the bishop emulating the writings of a person never mentioned in his works. First, to insinuate that Gregory derived his rather individualistic exegetical approach to reading the psalms as guarantors of the fulfillment of salvation history from Augustine's *De civitate Dei* is debatable.[83]

79 Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 153, identifies Gustavo Vinay's as one of the harshest critiques of Gregory's theology. See Vinay, *San Gregorio di Tours*, 21-32.

80 Cf. Shanzer, "Review Article, 251-53.

81 Ibid., 251 n. 30, where Shanzer critiques Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 81-82.

82 Guy Halsall, "Nero and Herod?" 344-46, plausibly suggests Gregory may have participated in building the Austrasian-Neustrian alliance in 581. Gregory's logical reason for doing so would have been consistent with a principal theme of the *Historiae*, to keep peace and discourage civil warfare; ibid., 345-46. Regardless of whatever role Gregory played in mollifying relations between the Austrasians and Neustrians during the early 580s, his reason for distancing himself from Aegidius and the Nogent treaty in his writings was because that bishop's policy was increasingly proving to be an embarrassment at Childebert's court from the late 580s onwards. Gregory did not, however, maintain a lingering fear of King Guntram, who only controlled Tours for about a year in the aftermath of Chilperic's death; *contra* Halsall, "Nero and Herod?" 347-50; with Murray, "Chronology," 192-95; idem, "Composition," 92-94.

83 Heinzelmann, "Works of Gregory," 312. Simply consider all the individuals, especially family members, whom Gregory witnessed using the psalms from his earliest youth. To what extent

Next, to think that Gregory modeled his famous passage about the *mixte confusequae* condition of the world at *Historiae* 2 prologue on Augustine's *invicemque permixtas* two cities is inaccurate.[84] Finally, to suggest that Gregory's chronological composition of contemporary miracles in *VSM* somehow owes a debt to Augustine's mention at *De Civitate Dei* 22.8 that he once copied *libelli* featuring present-day miracles is simply too much of a stretch.[85] What about the obvious impact of Sulpicius Severus, Paulinus of Périgueux, and Forunatus's books about Martin's miracles, all of which happen to exhibit a chronological design, on Gregory writing the *VSM*? This is not to discourage speculation on Augustinian influences on Gregory, the possibility of which I do not deny, particularly soft influences. I think, however, that the current notion of Gregory the "Augustinian" ought to be met with the utmost level of scholarly scrutiny.[86] I have attempted to convey that Gregory's morally instructive books were more the result of an organically experienced late ancient Gallic Christian society than the product of a study in patristic abstractions. The bishop's writings are indeed theologically sound, but this owes much to Gregory's layered buildup of practical pastoral techniques learned from parents, relatives, mentors, and fellow visionaries. The majority of Gregory's influences lie before our eyes in the bishop's pages – pious members of Gallic society with whom he lived and vestiges of lines from authors whom he read, many named in the text. Accordingly, what seems in order are deeper dives into the

should we envision these anecdotes as literary fabrications invented to align with a particular theological position?

84 *Contra* Heinzelmann, ibid., 288, 297-98. See Shanzer, "Review Article," 253, who critiques the earlier and subtler suggestion of Heinzelmann, *Gregory of Tours*, 103, for an Augustinian influence on Gregory's phrase. While Heinzelmann did not cite Shanzer's remark that textual research might have helped his claim, he did, in his later work, provide a side-by side comparison of the opening passage from *Historiae* 2 prologue alongside a sentence from *De Civitate Dei* 11.1; "Works of Gregory," 288. Nevertheless, the effort does not convince. It remains the case that Gregory clearly was not referring to the Church as *mixte confusequae* as Heinzelmann contends, but to historical events, the actions of saints and slaughters of peoples. As Shanzer explains: "If anything, the prologue to Book 2 sounds like an implicit defense of why Gregory is not writing pure *hagiography*"; Shanzer, "Review Article," 253. I have argued that it was a succession of traumatic events concentrated in the mid-570s which motivated Gregory to complement his hagiographical habit of glorifying the martyrs and confessors with a moralizing historical rendering of those *mixte confusequae* happenings. Reading Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* did not spur this effort.

85 Heinzelmann, "Works of Gregory," 318-19.

86 The dissimilarity between the two bishops' images for Last Judgment prompted Peter Brown to declare that if Gregory was familiar with Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, "he certainly paid no attention to Book 21"; Brown, *Ransom of the Soul*, 164-65.

influences of Cassian, Faustus of Riez, Prudentius, Paulinus of Périgueux, Sulpicius Severus, Sidonius Apollinaris, Avitus of Vienne, Caesarius of Arles, and Venantius Fortunatus to better comprehend the world in which this preacher thrived alongside the individuals whose souls he aspired to save.[87]

87 E. g., see Wheaton, "Gregory of Tours and Handbooks," who has unearthed how Gregory's dialogue with the Arian Visigoth Agilan at *Historiae* 5.43 draws directly from handbooks against heresy, including the *De Mysterio sanctae Trinitatis*, a composition most likely composed by Caesarius of Arles. My thanks to Ben Wheaton for early access to this forthcoming article.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Augustine of Hippo, *De civitate Dei*, ed. Bernhard Dombart and Alfons Kalb, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini de civitate dei*, *CCSL* 47-48. Turnhout: Brepols, 1955; ed. and trans. by William M. Green, 7 vols., LCL. London: W. Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957-1972.

———. *Enchiridion*, ed. by Ernest Evans in M. P. J. Van den Hout, E. Evans, J. Bauer, R. Vander Plaetse, S. D. Ruegg, M. V. O'Reilly, R. Vander Plaetse, and C. Beukers, *De fide rerum invisibilium. Enchiridion ad Laurentium de fide et spe et caritate. De catechizandis rudibus. Sermo ad catechumenos de symbolo. Sermo de disciplina christiana. De utilitate ieiunii. Sermo de excidio urbis Romae. De haeresibus, CCSL* 46. Turnhout: Brepols, 1969. Trans. by Albert C. Outler, *Augustine: Confessions and Enchiridion*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1955.

———. *Sermones*, ed. by J.-P. Migne, *PL* 38-39. *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis episcopi opera omnia*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1845-1886.

Avitus of Vienne, *De spiritualis historiae gestis libri V*, ed. by R. Peiper, *MGH* AA 6.2. Berlin: Weidemann, 1883. Trans. by George Shea, *The Poems of Alcimus Ecdicius Avitus*, 71-133. Tempe, AZ: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1997.

———. *Epistulae et Homiliae*, ed. by R. Peiper, *MGH* AA 6.1-2. Berlin: Weidemann, 1883. Trans. by Danuta Shanzer and Ian Wood, *Avitus of Vienne: Letters and Selected Prose*. *TTH* 38. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002.

Baudonivia, *Vita S. Radegundis*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, *MGH* SRM 2, 377-95. Hanover: Hahn, 1888.

Caesarius of Arles, *Sermones*, ed. by G. Morin, *CCSL* 103-104. Turnholt: Brepols, 1953. Trans. by Mary Magdeline Mueller, *Saint Caesarius of Arles: Sermons*, 3 vols. New York: Fathers of the Church, 1956; Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1964-73.

Chronica gallica anno 452 and *Chronica gallica anno 511*, ed. Theodor Mommsen, *MGH* AA 9, 632-66. Berlin: Weidemann, 1892.

Cyprian of Toulon, Firminus of Uzèz, Viventius, Messianus and Stephanus, *Vita Caesarii ep. Arelatensis*, ed. by G. Morin, *Sancti Caesarii opera omnia*, vol. 2: *Opera varia*. Maretioli: G. Morin, 1942. Trans. by William E. Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles: Life, Testament, Letters*, 9-65. *TTH* 19. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994.

Epistulae Austrasicae, ed. by W. Gundlach, *MGH* Epistulae 3, 110-53. Hanover: Hahn, 1892.

Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. and trans. by J. E. L. Oulton, 2 vols., *LCL* 153 and 265. London: W. Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926-32.

Fredegar, *Chronica*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, *MGH* SRM 2, 1-168. Hanover: Hahn, 1888.

Gallic Church Councils, ed. by Carlo de Clercq, *Conciliae Galliae*, *CCSL* 148-148A. Turnholt: Brepols, 1963.

Gregory I, Pope, *Dialogi*, ed. by Adelbert de Vogüé, *Gregoire le Grand. Dialogues*, *SC* 251, 260, 265. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1978-80. Trans. by Odo Zimmerman, *Saint Gregory the Great, Dialogues*, *Fathers of the Church* 39. New York: Fathers of the Church, 1959.

Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, ed. by Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, *Libri Historiarum X*, *MGH* SRM 1.1. Hanover: Hahn, 1951. Trans. by Lewis Thorpe, *Gregory of Tours, History of the Franks*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974.

———. *Libri Miraculorum*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, *Miracula et Opera Minora*, *MGH* SRM 1.2. Hanover: Hahn, 1969.

In Psalterii tractatum commentarius, ibid., 423-27; *Les "Tituli Psalmorum" des manuscrits latins*, ed. by Pierre Salmon, Collectanea Biblica Latini, vol. 12, 138-48. Rome: Abbaye Saint-Jérome, 1959.

Liber de miraculis Beati Andreae Apostoli, ed. by Max Bonnet, ibid., 171-196.

Liber de passione et de virtutibus S. Iuliani martyris, ed. by Bruno Krusch, ibid., 112-34. Trans. by Raymond Van Dam, *Saints and their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul*, 162-95. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Liber de virtutibus S. Martini episcopi, ibid., 134-211. Trans. by Raymond Van Dam, *Saints and their Miracles*, 199-303. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Liber in gloria confessorum, ibid., 294-369. Trans. by Raymond Van Dam, *Gregory of Tours, Glory of the Confessors*, *TTH* 5. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988.

Liber in gloria martyrum, ibid., 34-111. Trans. by Raymond Van Dam, *Gregory of Tours, Glory of the Martyrs*, *TTH* 4. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1998.

Liber vitae patrum, ibid., 211-94. Trans. by Edward James. *Gregory of Tours, Life of the Fathers*, 2nd ed., *TTH* 1. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1991.

Passio sanctorum martyrum septem dormientium apud Ephesum, ibid., 397-403.

Hydatius of Lemica, *Chronica*, ed. and trans. by Richard W. Burgess, *The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constantinopolitana: Two Complementary Accounts of the Final Years of the Roman Empire*, 74-123. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, ed. by W. M. Lindsay, *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri XX*, 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1911.

Jerome of Sidon, *Chronicon*, ed. by Rudolf Helm, *Eusebius Caesariensis Werke*, Band 7: *Die Chronik des Hieronymus / Hieronymi Chronicon*, Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der Ersten Jahrhunderte 47. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1956.

———. *Epistulae*, ed. by Isidorus Hilberg, *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae*, 3 vols., *CSEL* 54-56. Vienne and Leipzig: 1910-18; ed. and trans. by F. A. Wright, *Jerome: Select Letters*, *LCL* 262. London: W. Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933.

John Cassian, *Collationes*, *CSEL* 13. Vienna: C. Geroldi, 1886. Trans. by Boniface Ramsey, *John Cassian: The Conferences*, *ACW* 57. New York and Mahwah, NJ: Newman, 1997.

———. *De Institutis Coenobiorum et De Octo Principalium Vitiorum Remediis Libri XII*, *CSEL* 17. Vienna: C. Geroldi, 1888. Trans. by Boniface Ramsey, *John Cassian: The Institutes*, *ACW* 58. New York and Mahwah, NJ: Newman, 2000.

Jordanes, *Getica*, ed. by Theodor Mommsen, *MGH* AA 5.1, 53-138. Berlin: Weidemann, 1882.

Marius of Avenches, *Chronica*, ed. by Theodor Mommsen, *MGH* AA 11, 225-39. Berlin: Weidemann, 1898.

Orosius, Paulus. *Historiarum adversum paganos libri septem*, ed. by Carolus Zangemeister, *Pauli Orosii Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII, accedit eiusdem Liber apologeticus*, *CSEL* 5. Vienna: C. Geroldi, 1882. Trans. by Roy J. Deferrari, *The Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*, *Fathers of the Church* 50. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001.

Passio sancti Desiderii episcopi et martyris, ed., Bruno Krusch, *MGH* SRM 3, 638-45. Hanover: Hahn, 1896.

Passio sancti Iuliani martyris, ed. by Bruno Krusch, *MGH* SRM 1.2, 429-31. Hanover: Hahn, 1969.

Pelagius I, Pope, *Epistulae*, ed. by Pius Gassó and Columba Batlle, *Pelagii I papae epistulae quae supersunt*. Barcelona: Abadia de Montserat, 1956.

Prosper of Aquitaine, *Epitoma chronica*, ed. by Theodor Mommsen, *MGH* AA 9, 341-499. Berlin: Weidemann, 1892.

Prudentius, *Poems*, ed. and trans. by H. J. Thompson, *Prudentius*, 2 vols., *LCL* 387, 398. London: W. Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949-1953.

Rufinus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. by Edouard Schwartz, *Eusebius Caesariensis Werke,* Band 2: *Die Kirchengeschichte*, Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der Ersten Jahrhunderte 9.2. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1908.

Salvian of Marseilles, *De gubernatione Dei*, ed. by Francis Pauly, *CSEL* 8, 1-200. Vienna: C. Geroldi, 1883.

———. *Timothei ad ecclesiam libri IIII*, ed. by Francis Pauly, CSEL 8, 224-316. Vienna: C. Geroldi, 1883.

Sidonius Apollinaris, *Poems and Letters*, ed. and trans. by W. B. Anderson, 2 vols., *LCL* 296, 420. London: W. Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936-65.

Sisebut, *Vita vel passio sancti Desiderii*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, *MGH* SRM 3, 630-37. Hanover: Hahn, 1896.

Sulpicius Severus, *Chronica*, *Dialogi*, *Vita sancti Martini*, ed by C. Halm, *CSEL* 1. Vienna: C. Geroldi, 1866. Ed. and trans. by Jacques Fontaine, *Sulpice Sévère, Vie de Saint Martin*, 3 vols. *Sources Chrétiennes* 133-135. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1967-69.

Venantius Fortunatus, *In laudem sanctae Mariae*, in *Venanti Honori Clementiani Fortunati, Opera Poetica*, ed. Frederick Leo, *MGH* AA 4.1, 371-80.

———. *Poems*, ed. and trans. by Michael Roberts, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library. London and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017.

———. *Prose Vitae*, ed. by F. Leo, *Opera Pedestria*, *MGH* AA 4.2. Berlin: Weidemann, 1885.

De virtutibus S. Hilarii ep. Pictavensis, ibid., 8-11.

Vita S. Germani ep. Parisiensis, ibid., 11-27.

Vita S. Hilarii ep. Pictavensis, ibid., 1-7.

Vita S. Marcelli ep. Parisiensis, ibid., 49-54.

Vita S. Radegundis, ibid., 38-49.

———. *Vita S. Martini Libri IV*, ed. by F. Leo, *Opera Poetica*, *MGH* AA 4.1, 293-370. Berlin: Weidemann, 1881.

Victricius of Rouen, *De laude sanctorum*, ed. by J. Mulders and R. Demeulenaere, *CCSL* 64. 1985, 53-93.

Virgil, *Aeneid.*, ed. by J. P. Goold, and trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough, *Virgil*, 2 vols., LCL 63-64. London: W. Heinemann; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999-2001.

Visio Pauli, ed. by Claude Carozzi, *Eschatologie et au-delà. Recherches sur l'Apocalypse de Paul.* Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 1994. Trans. by Montague Rhodes James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 525-55. Oxford: Clarendon, 1924.

Vita. S. Apollinaris ep. Valentiniensis, ed. by Bruno Krusch, *MGH* SRM 3, 194-203. Hanover: Hahn, 1896.

Vita S. Clotildis, ed. by Bruno Krusch, *MGH* SRM 2, 341-48. Hanover: Hahn, 1888.

Secondary Works

Amat, Jacqueline. *Songes et Visions: L'au-delà dans la literature latine tardive*. Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1985.

Antin, Paul. "Emplois de la Bible chéz Grégoire de Tours et Mgr Pie." *Latomus* 26 (1967): 778-82.

———. "Notes sur le style de saint Grégoire de Tours et ses emprunts (?) à Philostrate." *Latomus* 22 (1963): 273-84.

Ampère, Jean-Jacques. *Histoire littéraire de la France avant le douzième siècle*, 2 vols. Paris: Hachette, 1839-40.

Armand, Frédéric. *Chilpéric Ier: Petit-fils de Clovis, grand-père de Dagobert, le roi assassiné deux fois*. Paris: La Louvre, 2016.

Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Trans. by Willard R. Trask. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953.

Bachrach, Bernard S. *The Anatomy of a Little War: A Diplomatic and Military History of the Gundovald Affair (568-586)*. Boulder, CO, San Francisco and Oxford: Westview, 1994.

———. "Gregory of Tours as a Military Historian." In *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. K. Mitchell and I. N. Wood, 351-63. Leiden, Boston and Cologne: Brill, 2002.

———. "Merovingian Mercenaries and Paid Soldiers in Imperial Perspective." In *Mercenaries and Paid Men: The Mercenary Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. John France, 167-92. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008.

Bailey, Lisa Kaaren. *Christianity's Quiet Success: The Eusebius Gallicanus Sermon Collection and the Power of the Church in Late Antique Gaul*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010.

———. *Religious Worlds of the Laity in Late Antique Gaul*. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016.

———. "Within and Without: Lay People and the Church in Gregory of Tours' Miracle Stories." *Journal of Late Antiquity* 5.1 (2012): 119-144.

Beaujard, Brigitte. *Le culte des saints en Gaule: Les premiers temps. D'Hilaire de Poitiers à la fin du VIe siècle*. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2000.

Beck, Henry G. J. *The Pastoral Care of Souls in South East France during the Sixth Century*. Rome: Aedes Universitatis Gregorianae, 1950.

Bernstein, Alan E. *The Formation of Hell: Death and Retribution in the Ancient and Early Christian Worlds*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993.

———. *Hell and Its Rivals: Death and Retribution among Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the Early Middle Ages*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017.

———. "Named Others and Named Places: Stigmatization in the Early Medieval Afterlife." In *Hell and Afterlife: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Isabel Moreira and Margaret Toscano, 53-71. Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2010.

Beumann, Helmut. "Gregor von Tours und der Sermo rusticus." In *Spiegel der Geschichte. Festgabe für Max Braubach zum 10. April 1964*, ed. K. Repgen and S. Skalweit, 69-98. Münster: Aschendorff, 1964.

Biraben, J.-N., and Jacques Le Goff. "The Plague in the Early Middle Ages." In *Biology of Man in History*, ed. R. Forster and O. Ranum, trans. E. Forster and P. M. Ranum, 48-80. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975.

Bonnet, Max. *Le Latin de Grégoire de Tours*. Paris: Hachette, 1890.

Bourgain, Pascal. "The Works of Gregory of Tours: Manuscripts, Language, and Style." In *A Companion to Gregory of Tours*, ed. Alexander Callander Murray, 141-88. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

Bremmer, Jan N. "Christian Hell: From the *Apocalypse of Peter* to the *Apocalypse of Paul*." *Numen* 56 (2009): 298-325.

———. *The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Brennan, Brian. "'Being Martin': Saint and Successor in Sixth-Century Tours." *Journal of Religious History* 21.2 (1997): 121-35.

———. "The Career of Venantius Fortunatus." *Traditio* 41 (1985): 49-87.

———. "The Conversion of the Jews of Clermont in AD 576." *Journal of Theological Studies* 36 (1985): 321-37.

———. "The Image of Frankish Kings in the Poetry of Venantius Fortunatus." *Journal of Medieval History* 10 (1984): 1-11.

———. "St Radegund and the Early Development of Her Cult at Poitiers." *Journal of Religious History* 13 (1985): 340-354.

———. "Text and Image: 'Reading' the Walls of the Sixth-Century Cathedral of Tours." *Journal of Medieval Latin* 6 (1996): 65-83.

Breukelaar, Adriaan H. B. *Historiography and Episcopal Authority in Sixth-Century Gaul: The Histories of Gregory of Tours Interpreted in Their Historical Context*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994.

Brown, Peter. *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

———. "The Decline of the Empire of God: Amnesty, Penance, and the Afterlife from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages." In *Last Things: Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, ed. Carolyn Walker Bynum and Paul Freedman, 41-59, 277-83. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000.

———. "Enjoying the Saints in Late Antiquity." *Early Medieval Europe* 9 (2000): 1-24.

———. "*Gloriosus Obitus*: The End of the Ancient Other World." In *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R. A. Markus*, ed. William E. Klingshirn and Mark Vessey, 289-314. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999.

———. *The Ransom of the Soul: Afterlife and Wealth in Early Western Christianity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015.

———. "Relics and Social Status in the Age of Gregory of Tours." Stenton Lecture, 1976. Reading: University of Reading, 1977.

———. *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, AD 200-1000*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 2003.

———. *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Oxford: University of California Press, 1982.

———. *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012.

Brunhölzl, Franz. *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, 2 vols. Munich: Fink, 1975-92.

Buchberger, Erica. *Shifting Ethnic Identities in Spain and Gaul, 500-700: From Romans to Goths and Franks*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017.

Burgess, Richard W. "Hydatius and the Final Frontier: The Fall of the Roman Empire and the End of the World." In *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity*, ed. Ralph W. Mathisen and Hagith S. Sivan, 321-32. Burlington, VT and Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1996.

Bynum, Carolyn Walker. *The Resurrection of the Dead in Western Christianity, 200-1336*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.

Bynum, Caroline Walker, and Paul Freedman, eds. *Last Things: Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000.

Cameron, Alan. "The Early Religious Policies of Justin II." In *The Orthodox Churches and the West*, ed. Derek Baker, 51-67. Oxford: Blackwell, 1976.

Claude, Dietrich. "Die Bestellung der Bischöfe im merowingischen Reich." *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte Kanonistische Abteilung* 49 (1963): 1-75.

Carozzi, Claude. "Le Clovis de Grégoire de Tours." *Le Moyen Age* 98 (1992): 169-85.

———. *Le voyage de l'âme dans l'au delà d'après le literature latine* (*Ve-XIIIe siècle*). Palais Farnèse: École Français de Rome, 1994.

Caseau, Beatrice. "Crossing the Impenetrable Frontier between Earth and Heaven." In *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity*, ed. Ralph W. Mathisen and Hagith S. Sivan, 333-43. Burlington, VT and Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1996.

Cavadini, John C. "Ambrose and Augustine *De Bono Mortis*." In *The Limits of Ancient Christianity*, ed. William Klingshirn and Mark Vessey, 232-49. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999.

Chedéville, André. "Francs et Bretons pendant la première moitié du VI e siècle: avant la rupture." In *Clovis: Histoire et Mémoire*, 2 vols., ed. Michel Rouche, 1: 899-915. Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1997.

Collins, Roger. "Gregory of Tours and Spain." In *A Companion to Gregory of Tours*, ed. Alexander Callander Murray, 498-515. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

———. "Theodebert I, 'Rex Magnus Francorum.'" In *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society. Studies Presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. Patrick Wormald, 7-33. Oxford: Blackwell, 1983.

Copeman, W. S. C. *A Short History of the Gout and the Rheumatic Diseases*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964.

Corbett, John H. "Changing Perceptions in Late Antiquity: Martin of Tours." *Toronto Journal of Theology* 3.2 (1987): 236-51.

———. "Hagiography and the Experience of the Holy in the Work of Gregory of Tours." *Florilegium* 7 (1985): 40-54.

———. "*Praesentium signorum munera*: The Cult of the Saints in the World of Gregory of Tours." *Florilegium* 5 (1983): 44-61.

———. "The Saint as Patron in the Works of Gregory of Tours." *Journal of Medieval History* 7 (1981): 1-13.

Craig, Kalani. "Bishops and Balancing Acts: Divine and Human Agency in Gregory of Tours' Vision of Episcopal Authority." In *Envisioning the Bishops: Images and the Episcopacy in the Middle Ages*, ed. Sigrid Danielson and Evan A. Gatti, 63-89. Turnhout, Brepols 2014.

Dailey, E. T. "Gregory of Tours and the Paternity of Chlothar II: Strategies of Legitimation in the Merovingian Kingdoms." *Journal of Late Antiquity* 7.1 (2014): 3-27.

———. *Queens, Consorts, Concubines: Gregory of Tours and Women of the Merovingian Elite*. Leiden: Brill, 2015.

Daly, William. "Clovis: How Barbaric, How Pagan?" *Speculum* 69 (1994): 619-64.

De Nie, Giselle. "*Divinos Concipe Sensus*: Envisioning Divine Wonders in Paulinus of Nola and Gregory of Tours." In *Seeing the Invisible in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Giselle de Nie, K. F. Morrison, and M. Mostert, 69-117. Turnhout: Brepols, 2005.

———. *Poetics of Wonder: Testimonies of the New Christian Miracles in the Late Antique Latin World*. Turnout: Brepols, 2012.

———. *Views from a Many-Windowed Tower: Studies of Imagination in the Works of Gregory of Tours*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1987.

———. *Word, Image and Experience: Dynamics of Miracle and Self-Perception in Sixth-Century Gaul*. Variorum Collected Studies. London: Routledge, 2003.

Delehaye, Hippolyte. *Sanctus: Essai sur le cultes des saints dans l'antiquité*. Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1927.

Demacopoulos, George. *Five Models of Spiritual Direction in the Early Church*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007.

Dumézil, Bruno. *La reine Brunehaut*. Paris: Fayard, 2008.

Duval, Yvette. *Auprès des saints corps et âme: L'inhumation "ad sanctos" dans la chrétienté d'Orient et d'Occident du IIIe au VIIe siècle*. Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1988.

Effros, Bonnie. *Caring for Body and Soul: Burial and Afterlife in the Merovingian World*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002.

Esders, Stefan. "'Avenger of all Perjury' in Constantinople, Ravenna and Metz: Saint Polyeuctus, Sigibert I, and the Division of Charibert's Kingdom in 568." In *Western Perspectives on the Mediterranean: Cultural Transfer in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, 400-800 AD*, ed. Andreas Fischer and I. N. Wood, 17-40, 111-29. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.

———. "Gallic Politics in the Sixth Century." In *A Companion to Gregory of Tours*, ed. Alexander Callander Murray, 429-61. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

Esders, Stefan, Yitzhak Hen, Pia Lucas and Tamar Rotman, eds. *The Merovingian Kingdoms and the Mediterranean World: Revisiting the Sources*. London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2019.

Ewig, Eugen. *Die Merowinger und das Frankenreich*. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1988.

———. *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien: Gesammelte Schriften (1952-1973)*, 2 vols. Munich: Artemis Verlag, 1976.

Favrod, Justin. *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde (443-534)*. Lausanne: Bibliothèque historique Vaudoise, 1997.

Flint, Valerie J. "The Early Medieval 'Medicus', the Saint—and the Enchanter." *Journal of the Society for the Social History of Medicine* 2 (1989): 127-45.

Folz, Robert. *Les saints rois du moyen âge en Occident (VIe-XIIIe s.)*. Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1984.

———. "Zur Frage der heiligen Könige: Heiligkeit und Nachleben in der Geschichte des burgundischen Königtums." *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 14 (1958): 317-44.

Fontaine, Jacques. *Sulpice Sévère. Vie de Saint Martin*, 3 vols., I: Introduction, texte et traduction. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1967.

Fouracre, Paul. "Merovingian History and Merovingian Hagiography." *Past and Present* 127 (1990): 3-38.

———. "Why Were So Many Bishops Killed in Merovingian Francia?" In *Bischofsmord im Mittelalter: Murder of Bishops*, ed. Natalie Fryde and Dirk Reitz, 13-35. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2003.

Fox, Yaniv. "The Language of Sixth-century Frankish Diplomacy." In *The Merovingian Kingdoms and the Mediterranean World: Revisiting the Sources*, ed. Stefan Esders, Yitzhak Hen, Pia Lucas and Tamar Rotman, 63-75, 184-88. London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2019.

Gäbe, Sabine. "*Radegundis: Sancta, Regina, Ancilla*: Zum Heiligkeitsideal der Radegundisviten von Fortunatus und Baudonivia." *Francia* 16 (1988): 1-30.

Gauthier, Nancy. *L'évangélisation des pays de la Moselle. La Province Romaine de Première Belgique entre Antiquité et Moyen-age (IIIe-VIIIe siècles)*. Paris: De Boccard, 1980.

Geary, Patrick. *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

———. *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994.

Gehler-Rachůnek, Anna. "East and West from a Visigothic Perspective: How and Why Were Frankish Brides Negotiated in the Late Sixth Century." In *The Merovingian Kingdoms and the Mediterranean World: Revisiting the Sources*, ed. Stefan Esders, Yitzhak Hen, Pia Lucas and Tamar Rotman, 31-39. 172-77. London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2019.

George, Judith W. "Poet as Politician: Venantius Fortunatus's Panegyric to King Chilperic." *Journal of Medieval History* 15 (1989): 5-18.

———. *Venantius Fortunatus: A Latin Poet in Merovingian Gaul.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.

Goffart, Walter. "Byzantine Policy in the West under Tiberius II and Maurice: The Pretenders Hermenegild and Gundovald (579-585)." *Traditio* 13 (1957): 73-118.

———. "Conspicuously Absent: Martial Heroism in the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours and Its Likes." In *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. K. Mitchell and I. N. Wood, 365-93. Leiden, Boston and Cologne: Brill, 2002.

———. "The Conversions of Avitus of Clermont, and Similar Passages in Gregory of Tours." In *"To See Ourselves as Others See Us." Christians, Jews, "Others" in Late Antiquity*, ed. Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs, 473-97. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985.

———. "The Frankish Pretender Gundovald, 582–585. A Crisis of Merovingian Blood." *Francia* 39 (2012): 1–27.

———. "From *Historiae* to *Historia Francorum* and Back Again: Aspects of the Textual History of Gregory of Tours." In *Rome's Fall and After*, 255-74. Ronceverte, WV: Hambleton, 1989.
———. *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A. D. 550-800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.
Götsch, Kathrin. "Der Nonnenaufstand von Poitiers: Fläschenbrand oder apokalyptisches Zeichen? Zu den merowingischen Klosterfrauen in Gregor von Tours *Zehn Büchern Geschichte*." *Concillium Medii Aevi* 13 (2010): 1-18.
Goullet, Monique, Martin Heinzelmann, and Christiane Veyrard-Cosme, eds. *L'hagiographie mérovingienne à travers ses réécritures*. Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2010.
Gradowicz-Pancer, Nira. "Femmes royales et violences anti-épiscopales à l'époque mérovingienne: Frédégonde et le meurtre de l'évêque Prétextat." In *Bischofsmord im Mittelalter: Murder of Bishops*, ed. Natalie Fryde and Dirk Reitz, 37-50. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2003.
Graus, František. "Die Gewalt bei den Anfängen des Feudalismus und die 'Gefangenenbefreiungen' der Merowingischen Hagiographie." *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, part 1 (1960), 61–156.
———. *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger im Reich der Merowinger: Studien sur Hagiographie der Merowingerzeit*. Prague: Nakladatelství Ceskoslovenské, 1965.
Grey, Cam. "Demoniacs, Dissent, and Disempowerment in the Late Roman West: Some Case Studies from the Hagiographical Literature." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 13.1 (2005): 39-69.
Halfond, Gregory I. "All the King's Men: Episcopal Political Loyalties in the Merovingian Kingdoms." *Medieval Prosopography* 27.1 (2012): 76-96.
———. *The Archaeology of Frankish Church Councils, AD 511-768*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010.
———. *Bishops and the Politics of Patronage in Merovingian Gaul*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019.
———. "Charibert I and the Episcopal Leadership of the Kingdom of Paris (561–567)." *Viator* 43.2 (2012): 1-28.
———. "Contextualizing the Council of Tours (567)." In *Proceedings of the Fourteenth International Congress of Medieval Canon Law*, Toronto, 5-11 August 2012, ed., Joseph Goering, Stephan Dusil, and Andreas Their, 287-301. Toronto: Città del Vaticano Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2016.
———. "Negotiating Episcopal Support in the Merovingian Kingdom of Reims (AD 561–75)." *Early Medieval Europe* 22.1 (2014): 1-25.
———. "*Sis Quoque Catholicis Religionis Apex*: The Ecclesiastical Patronage of Chilperic I and Fredegund." *Church History* 81.1 (2012): 48-76.
———. "*Tenebrae Refulgeant*: Celestial *Signa* in Gregory of Tours." *The Heroic Age* 15 (2012): www.heroicage.org/issues/15/halfond.php, accessed 10 July, 2019.
———. "War and Peace in the *Acta* of the Merovingian Church Councils." In *The Medieval Way of War: Studies in Medieval Military History in Honor of Bernard S. Bachrach*, ed. Gregory I. Halfond, 29-46. Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2015.
Halphen, Louis. "Grégoire de Tours, Historien de Clovis." In *Mélanges d'histoire du moyen age offerts à M. Ferdinand Lot par ses amis et ses élèves*, 235-44. Paris: Champion, 1925.
Halsall, Guy. *Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West, 376-568*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
———. "Nero and Herod? The Death of Chilperic and Gregory's Writing of History." In *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. K. Mitchell and I. N. Wood, 337-50. Leiden, Boston and Cologne: Brill, 2002.
———. "The Preface to Book V of Gregory of Tours' Histories: Its Form, Context and Significance." *English Historical Review* 122 (2007): 297-317.
———. *Warfare and Society in the Barbarian West 450-900*. London: Routledge, 2003.
Handley, Mark A. *Death, Society and Culture: Inscriptions and Epitaphs in Gaul and Spain, AD 300-750*. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2003.

Harries, Jill. "Death and the Dead in the Late Roman West." In *Death in Towns: Urban Responses to the Dying and the Dead, 100–1600*, ed. Steven Bassett, 56-67. Leicester, London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1992.

Harrison, Richard M. "The Church of St. Polyeuktos in Istanbul and the Temple of Solomon." In *Okeanos. Essays presented to Ihor Sevcenko on His Sixtieth Birthday by his Colleagues and Students*, ed. C. Mango and O. Pritsak, 276-79. Cambridge, MA: Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University, 1983.

Hartmann, Martina. *Die Merowinger*. Munich: Beck, 2012.

———. *Aufbruch ins Mittelalter: Die Zeit der Merowinger*. Darmstadt: Primus, 2003.

Hauge, Matthew Ryan. *The Biblical Tour of Hell*. London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013.

Heather, Peter. *The Restoration of Rome*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Heinzelmann, Martin. "'Adel' und Societas sanctorum: Soziale Ordnungen und christliches Weltbild von Augustinus bis zu Gregor von Tours." In *Nobilitas: Funktion und Repräsentation des Adels in Alteuropa*, ed. O. G. Oexle and W. Paravicini, 224-34. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997.

———. *Bischofsherrschaft in Gallien: Zur Kontinuität römischer Führungsschichten vom 4. bis zum 7 Jahrhundert*. Munich: Artemis, 1976.

———. "Clovis dans le discours hagiographique du Vie au IXe siècle." *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartres* 154 (1996): 87-112.

———. "Die Funktion des Wunders in der spätantiken und frühmittelalterlichen Hagiographie." In *Mirakel im Mittelalter: Konzeptionen, Erscheinungsformen, Deutungen*, ed. Martin Heinzelmann, Klaus Herbers, and Dieter R. Bauer, 23-61. Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2002.

———. "Gallische Prosopographie, 260-527." *Francia* 10 (1982): 531-718.

———. *Gregor von Tours (538-594): "Zehn Bücher Geschichte": Historiographie und Gesellschaftskonzept im 6. Jahrhundert*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftlichte Buchgescellschaft, 1994.

———. "Gregory of Tours: The Elements of a Biography." In *A Companion to Gregory of Tours*, ed. Alexander Callander Murray, 7-34. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

———. *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century*. Trans. by Christopher Carroll. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

———. "L'hagiographie au service de l'histoire: l'évolution du 'genre' et le rôle de l'hagiographie sérielle." In *Des saints et des rois: l'hagiographie au service de l'histoire. Textes réunis par Françoise Laurent*, ed. Laurence Mathey-Maille and Michelle Szkilnik, 23-44. Paris: Champion, 2014.

———. "Heresy in Books I and II of Gregory of Tours' Historiae." In *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History. Essays presented to Walter Goffart*, ed. Alexander C. Murray, 67-82. Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1998.

———. "Histoire, rois et prophètes. Le rôle des éléments autobiographiques dans les *Histoires* de Grégoire de Tours: un guide épiscopal à l'usage du roi chrétien." In *De Tertullien aux Mozarabes. Mélanges offerts à Jacques Fontaine*, 3 vols., ed. L. Holtz, J.-C. Fredouille, and M.-H. Jullien, 1: 537-50. Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1992.

———. "Die Psalmen bei Gregor von Tours." In *Präsenz und Verwendung der Heiligen Schrift im christlichen Frühmittelalter: exegetische Literatur und liturgische Texte*, ed. Patrizia Carmassi, 33-57. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz in Kommission, 2008.

———. "Le Psautier de Grégoire de Tours." *Retour aux sources: Textes, études et documents d'histoire médiévale offerts à Michel Parisse*, ed. Sylvain Gouguenheim, Michel Goullet, and Odile Kammerer, 771-86. Paris: Picard, 2004.

———. "Une source de base de la littérature hagiographique latine: le recueil de miracles." In *Hagiographie, cultures et sociétés, IVe et XIIe siècles. Actes de colloques, organisé à Nanterre et à Paris*, 235-59. Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1981.

———. "Structures typologiques de l'histoire d'après les histoires de Grégoire de Tours: prophéties – accomplissement – renouvellement." *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 92 (2004): 569-596.
———. "The Works of Gregory of Tours and Patristic Tradition." In *A Companion to Gregory of Tours*, ed. Alexander Callander Murray, 281-336. Leiden: Brill, 2016.
Heinzelmann, Martin, and Joseph-Claude Poulin, *Les Vies anciennes de Sainte Geneviève de Paris*. Paris: Champion, 1986.
Helvétius, Anne-Marie. "De l'assassinat au martyre: la mort de Sigismond, roi des Burgondes (523)." In *La mort des rois: De Sigismond à Louis XIV (1715)*, ed. Joël Cornette and Anne-Marie Helvétius, 35-63. Paris: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 2017.
———. "Le récit de vengeance des saints dans l'hagiographie franque (VIe-IXe siècle)." In *La vengeance, 400-1200*, ed. Dominique Barthélemy, François Bougard, and Régine Le Jan, 421-50. Rome: École Française de Rome, 2006.
Hen, Yitzhak. "The Church in Sixth-Century Gaul." In *A Companion to Gregory of Tours*, ed. Alexander Callander Murray, 232-55. Leiden: Brill, 2016.
———. *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul, A.D. 481-751*. Leiden, New York and Cologne: Brill, 1995.
———. "Paganism and Superstitions in the Time of Gregory of Tours: *Une question mal posée!*" In *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. K. Mitchell and I. N. Wood, 229-40. Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 2002.
———. *Roman Barbarians: The Royal Court and Culture in the Early Medieval West*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
———. "The Uses of the Bible and the Perception of Kingship in Merovingian Gaul." *Early Medieval Europe* 7 (1998): 277-289
Hillgarth, J. N. "The *Historiae* of Orosius in the Early Middle Ages." In *De Tertullien aux Mozarabes. Mélanges offerts à Jacques Fontaine*, 3 vols., ed. L. Holtz, J.-C. Fredouille, and M.-H. Jullien, 2: 157-170. Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1992.
Hwang, Alexander Y., Brian J. Matz, and Augustine Casiday, eds. *Grace for Grace: The Debates After Augustine and Pelagius*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2014.
James, Edward. "*Beati pacifici*: Bishops and the Law in Sixth-Century Gaul." In *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West*, ed. J. A. Bossy, 25-46. Cambridge, London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
———. *The Franks*. Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1988.
———. "Gregory of Tours and the Franks." In *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History. Essays presented to Walter Goffart*, ed. Alexander C. Murray, 51-66. Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
———. *Gregory of Tours: Life of the Fathers*, 2d ed. *TTH* 1. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1991.
———. "A Sense of Wonder: Gregory of Tours, Medicine and Science." In *The Culture of Christendom: Essays in Medieval History in Commemoration of Denis L. T. Bethell*, ed. Mark Anthony Meyer, 45-60. London: Hambledon, 1993.
Janson, Tore. *Latin Prose Prefaces: Studies in Literary Conventions*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1964.
Jones, Allen E. *Social Mobility in Late Antique Gaul: Strategies and Opportunities for the Non-Elite*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
Jones, Peter Phillip. "Gregory of Tours' Poetics." *Comitatus* 46 (2015: 1-30.
Jussen, Bernhard. "Über 'Bischofsherrschaften' und die Prozeduren politisch-sozialer Umordnung in Gallien zwischen 'Antike' und 'Mittelalter.'" *Historische Zeitschrift* 260 (1995): 673-718.
Kaiser, Reinhold. *Der Burgunder*. Stuttgart: Urban-Taschenbücher, 2006.

Keely, Avril. "Arians and Jews in the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours." *Journal of Medieval History* 23.2 (1997): 103-15.

———. "Early Medieval Narrative: The Political Ideas of Gregory of Tours." *Parergon* 14.2 (1997): 129-41.

Kershaw, Paul. *Peaceful Kings: Peace, Power, and the Early Medieval Political Imagination*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Kessler, Herbert L. "Pictorial Narrative and Church Mission in Sixth-Century Gaul." In *Pictorial Narrative in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. Herbert L. Kessler and Marianna Shreve Simpson, 75-91. Washington, DC: Gallery of Art, 1985.

Kitchen, John. "Gregory of Tours, Hagiography, and the Cult of the Saints in the Sixth Century." In *A Companion to Gregory of Tours*, ed. Alexander Callander Murray, 375-426. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

———. "Saints, Doctors, and Soothsayers: The Dynamics of Healing in Gregory of Tours's *De Virtutibus Sancti Martini*." *Florilegium* 13 (1993): 15-32.

———. *Saints' Lives and the Rhetoric of Gender: Male and Female in Merovingian Hagiography*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Klingshirn, William E. *Caesarius of Arles: The Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

———. "Charity and Power: Caesarius of Arles and the Ransoming of Captives in Sub-Roman Gaul." *Journal of Roman Studies* 75 (1985): 183-203.

———. "Christian Divination in Late Roman Gaul: The *Sortes Sangallenses*." In *Mantikê: Studies in Ancient Divination*, ed. Sarah Illes Johnston and Peter T. Struck. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

———. "Defining the *Sortes Sanctorum*: Gibbon, Du Cange, and Early Christian Lot Divination." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 10.1 (2002): 77-130

Kreiner, Jamie. *The Social Life of Hagiography in the Merovingian Kingdom*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Kremer, K., G. Simpson, and S. Giradclos. "Giant Lake Geneva Tsunami in AD 563." *Nature Geoscience* 5 (2012): 756-57.

Kurth, Godefroid. *Études franques*, 2 vols. Paris and Brussels: Champion and Dewit, 1919.

Landes, Richard. "Lest the Millennium Be Fulfilled: Apocalyptic Expectations and the Pattern of Western Chronography, 100-800 CE." In *Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages*, ed. W. Verbeke, D. Verhelst, and A. Welkenhuysen, 137-211. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1988.

Leyser, Conrad. "'Divine Power Flowed from His Book': Ascetic Language and Episcopal Authority in Gregory of Tours' *Life of the Fathers*." In *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. K. Mitchell and I. N. Wood, 281-94. Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 2002.

Lifshitz, Felice. "Apostolicity Theses in Gaul: The *Histories* of Gregory and the 'Hagiography' of Bayeux." In *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. K. Mitchell and I. N. Wood, 211-28. Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 2002.

———. "Beyond Positivism and Genre: 'Hagiographical' Texts as Historical Narrative." *Viator* 25 (1994): 95-114.

Little, Lester K. "Life and Afterlife of the First Plague Pandemic." In *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541-750*, ed. Lester K. Little, 3-32. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Loseby, Simon T. "Gregory of Tours, Italy, and the Empire." In *A Companion to Gregory of Tours*, ed. Alexander Callander Murray, 462-97. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

Lucas, Pia. "*Magnus et Verus Christianus*: The Portrayal of Emperor Tiberius II in Gregory of Tours." In *The Merovingian Kingdoms and the Mediterranean World: Revisiting the Sources*, ed. Stefan Esders, Yitzhak Hen, Pia Lucas and Tamar Rotman, 127-39, 207-13. London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2019.

Martindale, J. R. *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. 2, *A.D. 395-527*. Cambridge, London, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

———. *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. 3 A-B, *A.D. 527-641*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Mathisen, Ralph W. "Clovis, Anastasius, and Political Status in 508 C.E.: The Frankish Aftermath of the Battle of Vouillé." In *The Battle of Vouillé, 507 CE: Where France Began*, ed., Ralph W. Mathisen and Danuta Shanzer, 79-110. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012.

———. "Crossing the Supernatural Frontier in Western Late Antiquity." In *Shifting Frontiers in Late Antiquity*, ed. Ralph W. Mathisen and Hagith S. Sivan, 309-20. Burlington, VT and Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1996.

———. *Ecclesiastical Factionalism and Religious Controversy in Fifth-Century Gaul*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1989.

———. "The Family of Georgius Florentius Gregorius and the Bishops of Tours." *Medievalia et Humanistica* 12 (1984): 83-95.

———. "For Specialists Only: The Reception of Augustine and His Theology in Fifth-Century Gaul." In *Augustine. Presbyter Factus Sum*, ed. Joseph T. Lienhart, Earl C. Muller and Roland J. Teske, 29-41. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.

———. "The Use and Misuse of Jerome in Gaul during Late Antiquity." In *Jerome of Stridon: His Life, Writings and Legacy*, ed. Andrew Cain and Josef Lössl, 191-208. Farnham, Surrey, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009.

———. "Vouillé, Voulon, and the Location of the Campus Vogladensis." In *The Battle of Vouillé, 507 CE: Where France Began*, ed. Ralph W. Mathisen and Danuta Shanzer, 43-61. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012.

McCluskey, Stephen C. *Astronomies and Cultures in Early Medieval Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

McCready, William D. *Signs of Sanctity: Miracles in the Thought of Gregory the Great*. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1989.

Mitchell, Kathleen. "Saints and Public Christianity in the *Historiae* of Gregory of Tours." In *Religion, Culture and Society in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. T. F. X. Noble and J. J. Contreni, 77-94. Kalamazoo, MI: Institute of Medieval Studies, 1983.

Mitchell, Kathleen, and Ian N. Wood, eds. *The World of Gregory of Tours*. Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 2002.

Monod, Gabriel. *Études critiques sur les Sources de l'Histoire Mérovingienne. Ière parti: Grégoire de Tours, Marius d'Avenches.* Paris: F. Vieweg, 1878.

Monroe, William S. "*Via iustitiae*: The Biblical Sources of Justice in Gregory of Tours." In *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. K. Mitchell and I. N. Wood, 99-112. Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 2002.

Moore, Michael E. *A Sacred Kingdom: Bishops and the Rise of Frankish Kingship, 300-850*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2011.

Moreira, Isabel. *Dreams, Visions, and Spiritual Authority in Merovingian Gaul*. Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2001.

———. *Heaven's Purge: Purgatory in Late Antiquity.* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

———. "Plucking Sinners Out of Hell: St. Martin's Resurrection Miracle." In *Hell and Its Afterlife: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Isabel Moreira and Margaret Toscano, 39-52. Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2010.

Moreira, Isabel, and Margaret Toscano, eds. *Hell and Its Afterlife: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2010.

Murray, Alexander Callander. "Chronology and the Composition of the Histories of Gregory of Tours." *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1.1 (2008): 157-196.

———. ed. *A Companion to Gregory of Tours*. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

———. "The Composition of the Histories of Gregory of Tours and its Bearing on the Political Narrative." In *A Companion to Gregory of Tours*, ed. Alexander Callander Murray, 63-101. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

———. "The Merovingian State and Administration in the Times of Gregory of Tours." In *A Companion to Gregory of Tours*, ed. Alexander Callander Murray, 191-231. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

———. "*Pax et disciplina*: Roman Public Law and the Frankish State." In *Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Medieval Canon Law, Syracuse, New York, August 13-18, 1996*, ed. Kenneth Pennington, Stanley Chodorow, and Keith H. Kendall, 269-85. Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2001.

Nelson, Janet L. "Queens as Jezebels: Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History." In *Medieval Women*, ed. Derek Baker, 31-77. Oxford: Blackwell, 1977.

———. "Royal Saints and Early Medieval Kingship." In *Sanctity and Secularity: The Church and the World*, ed. Derek Baker, 39-44. New York: Harper & Row, 1973.

New Catholic Encyclopedia, The, 2d ed., 15 volumes. Detroit: Thomson/Gale; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 2003.

Nodes, Daniel J. "Avitus of Vienne's Spiritual History and the Semipelagian Controversy: The Doctrinal Implications of Books I-III." *Vigiliae Christianae* 38 (1984): 185-95.

Nonn, Ulrich. "'*Ballomeris Quidam*.' Ein merowingischer Prätendent des VI. Jahrhunderts." In *Arbor amoena comis: 25 Jahre mittellateinisches Seminar in Bonn 1965-1990*, ed. Ewald Könsgen, 35-40. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1990.

Norton, Peter. *Episcopal Elections, 250-600: Hierarchy and Popular Will in Late Antiquity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Palmer, James T. *Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Patterson, David J. "*Adversus Paganos*: Disaster, Dragons, and Episcopal Authority in Gregory of Tours." *Comitatus* 44 (2013): 1-28.

Paxton, Frederick S. *Christianizing Death: The Creation of a Ritual Process in Early Medieval Europe*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990.

———. "Liturgy and Healing in an Early Medieval Saint's Cult: The Mass *In Honore Sancti Sigismundi* for the Cure of Fevers." *Traditio* 49 (1994): 23-43.

———. "Power and the Power to Heal. The Cult of St Sigismund of Burgundy." *Early Medieval Europe* 2 (1993): 95-110.

Petersen, Joan M. "Dead or Alive? The Holy Man as Healer in East and West in the Late Sixth Century." *Journal of Medieval History* 9 (1983): 91-98.

Pietri, Luce. *La ville de Tours du IVe au VIe siècle. Naissance d'une cité chrétienne*. Rome: École française de Rome, 1983.

Pizarro, Joaquín Martínez. "Gregory of Tours and the Literary Imagination: Genre, Narrative Style, Sources, and Models in the *Histories*." In *A Companion to Gregory of Tours*, ed. Alexander Callander Murray, 337-74. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

———. *A Rhetoric of the Scene: Dramatic Narration in the Early Middle Ages*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989.

Pollmann, Karla. *The Baptized Muse: Early Christian Poetry as Cultural Authority*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Pontal, Odette. *Histoire des conciles mérovingiens*. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1989.

Poulin, Joseph-Claude. *L'hagiographie bretonne du haut Moyen Âge: Répertoire raisonné*. Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2009.

Pratsch, Thomas. "Exploring the Jungle: Hagiographical Literature between Fact and Fiction." In *Fifty Years of Prosopography: The Later Roman Empire, Byzantium, and Beyond*, ed. Averil Cameron, 59-72. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Price, Richard. "Informal Penance in Early Medieval Christendom." In *Retribution, Repentance, and Reconciliation,* ed. Kate Cooper and Jeremy Gregory, 29-38. Woodbridge, Suffolk, and Rochester, NY: Boydell and Brewer, 2004.

Rapp, Claudia. *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005.

Rebillard, Éric. *In hora mortis: Évolution de la pastorale chrétienne de la mort au IVe et Ve siècles dans l'occident latin*. Palais Farnèse: École française de Rome, 1994.

Reimitz, Helmut. *History, Frankish Identity and the Framing of Western Identity, 550-850.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

———. "The Providential Past: Visions of Frankish Identity in the Early Medieval History of Gregory of Tours' *Historiae* (sixth-ninth century)." In *Visions of Community in the Post-Roman World: The West, Byzantium and the Islamic World, 300-1100*, ed. Walter Pohl, 109-35. Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2012.

———. "Social Networks and Identities in Frankish Historiography. New Aspects of the Textual History of Gregory of Tours' *Historiae*." In *The Construction of Communities in the Early Middle Ages: Texts, Resources and Artefacts*, ed. Richard Corradini, Max Diesenberger, and Helmut Reimitz, 229-68. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

———. "True Differences: Gregory of Tours' Account of the Council of Mâcon (585)." In *The Merovingian Kingdoms and the Mediterranean World: Revisiting the Sources*, ed. Stefan Esders, Yitzhak Hen, Pia Lucas and Tamar Rotman, 19-28, 167-72. London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2019.

Reydellet, Marc. *La royalté dans la littérature latine de Sidoine Apollinaire à Isidore de Séville*. Rome: École française de Rome, 1981.

Riché, Pierre. *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West, Sixth through Eighth Centuries*. Trans. By John J. Contreni. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1976.

Roberts, Michael. *The Humblest Sparrow: The Poetry of Venantius Fortunatus*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2009.

———. *The Jeweled Style. Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989.

———. "Venantius Fortunatus and Gregory of Tours: Patronage and Poetry." In *A Companion to Gregory of Tours*, ed. Alexander Callander Murray, 35-59. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

———. "Venantius Fortunatus' Elegy on the Death of Galswintha (*Carm* 6.5)." In *Society and Culture in Late Antique Gaul: Revisiting the Sources*, ed. Ralph W. Mathisen and Danuta Shanzer, 298-312. Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001.

———. "Venantius Fortunatus's Life of Saint Martin." *Traditio* 57 (2002): 129-187.

Rosenwein, Barbara. "Les émotions de la vengeance." In *La vengeance, 400-1200*, ed. Dominique Barthélemy, François Bougard, and Régine Le Jan, 237-57. Rome: École Française de Rome, 2006.

Rouche, Michel. *L'Aquitaine des Wisigoths aux Arabes, 418-781: Naissance d'une région*. Paris: Éditions Jean Touzot, 1979.

Rousseau, Philip. "Gregory's Kings, the Theatre of the 'Modern', and the Endurance of Romanitas." In *Motions of Late Antiquity: Essays on Religion, Politics, and Society in Honour of Peter Brown*, ed. Jamie Kreiner and Helmut Reimitz, 209-29. Turnhout: Brepols, 2016.

Russell, Jeffrey Burton. *A History of Heaven: The Singing Silence*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Sauvel, Tony. "Les miracles de Saint Martin: Recherches sur les peintures murales de Tours au Ve et au VIe siècle." *Bulletin Monumental* 114 (1956): 153-179.

Scheibelreiter, Georg. *Der Bischof in merowinger Zeit*. Vienna: Böhlau, 1983.

———. "The Death of the Bishop in the Early Middle Ages." In *The End of Strife*, ed. David Loades, 32-43. T. & T. Clark: Edinburgh, 1984.

———. "Königstöchter im Kloster: Radegund (ob. 587) und der Nonnenaufstand von Poitiers (589)." *Mitteilungen der Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 87 (1979): 1-37.

Schmitt, Jean-Claude. *Les revenants. Les vivants et les morts dans la société médiévale*. Paris: Gallimard, 1994.

Schove, D. Justin, and Alan Fletcher, *Chronology of Eclipses and Comets, AD 1 – 1000*. Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell Press, 1984.

Selle-Hosbach, Karin. *Prosopographie merowingischer Amtsträger in der Zeit von 511 bis 613*. Bonn: unpublished dissertation, 1974.

Settipani, Christian. "Les Aviti et les évêques de Clermont du Ve au VIIIe siècle." In *Colloque Saint Julien de Brioude, Actes du colloque international organisé par la ville de Brioude du 22 au 24 sept. 2004*, ed. Alain Dubreucq, Christian Lauranson-Rosaz, and Bernard Sanial, 129-170. Brioude: Centre européen de recherches sur les congrégations et ordres religieux, 2007.

Shanzer, Danuta. "Dating the Baptism of Clovis: The Bishop of Vienne Vs the Bishop of Tours." *Early Medieval Europe* 7 (1998): 29–57.

———. "Gregory of Tours and Poetry: Prose into Verse and Verse into Prose." In *Aspects of the Language of Latin Prose*, ed. T. Reinhardt, M. Laidge, and J. N. Adams, 303-19. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

———. "History, Romance, Love, and Sex in Gregory of Tours' *Decem Libri Historiarum*." In *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. K. Mitchell and I. N. Wood, 395-418. Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 2002.

———. "Jerome, Tobit, Alms, and the Vita Aeterna." In *Jerome of Stridon: His Life, Writings and Legacy*, ed. Andrew Cain and Josef Lössl, 87-103. Farnham, Surrey, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009.

———. "Laughter and Humour in the Early Medieval Latin West." In *Humour, History and Politics in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Guy Halsall, 25-47. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

———. "One Dead Girl, Two Living Ladies, Qohelet, and the Judgment of Man: Eschatalogical Problems, Particular Judgment, and Jerome's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*." In *Hieronymus als Exeget und Theologe: Interdisziplinäre Zugänge zum Koheletkommentar des Hieronymus*, ed. Elisabeth Birnbaum and Ludger Schwinehorst-Schönberger, 147-69. Leuven, Paris and Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2014.

———. "Review Article: *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century* by Martin Heinzelmann." *Medieval Prosopography* 23 (2002): 247-66.

———. "So Many Saints—So Little Time: The *Libri Miraculorum* of Gregory of Tours." *Journal of Medieval Latin* 13 (2003): 19-60.

———. "Vouillé 507: Historiographical, Hagiographical, and Diplomatic Reconsiderations and Fortuna." In *The Battle of Vouillé, 507 CE: Where France Began*, ed. Ralph W. Mathisen and Danuta Shanzer, 63-78. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012.

Shanzer, Danuta, and Ian Wood. *Avitus of Vienne: Letters and Selected Prose. TTH* 38. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002.

Shaw, Richard. "Chronology, Composition, and Authorial Conception in Gregory of Tours' *Miracula*." In *A Companion to Gregory of Tours*, ed. Alexander Callander Murray, 102-40. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

Sicard, Damien. *La liturgie de la mort dans l'église latine des origins à la reforme carolingienne*. Münster Wesetfalen: Aschendorff, 1978.

Smalley, Beryl. *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1952. Reprint: Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964.

Smith, Thomas A. *De Gratia: Faustus of Riez's Treatise on Grace and Its Place in the History of Theology*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990.

Stancliffe, Clare. *Saint Martin and His Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.

Stoclet, Alain J. "*Consilia humana, ops divina, superstitio*: Seeking Succor and Solace in Times of Plague." In *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541-750*, ed. Lester K. Little, 135-49. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Stüber, Till. "The Fifth Council of Orléans and the Reception of the 'Three Chapters Controversy' in Merovingian Gaul." In *The Merovingian Kingdoms and the Mediterranean World: Revisiting the Sources*, ed. Stefan Esders, Yitzhak Hen, Pia Lucas and Tamar Rotman, 93-102, 193-99. London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2019.

Thürlemann, Felix. *Das Historische Diskurs bei Gregor von Tours: Topoi und Wirklichkeit*. Bern: Herbert Lang, 1974.

Turner, Peter. *Truthfulness, Realism, Historicity: A Study in Late Antique Spiritual Literature*. Farnham, Surrey, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012

Tyrrell, V. Alice. *Merovingian Letters and Letter Writers*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2019.

Uhalde, Kevin. *Expectations of Justice in the Age of Augustine*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007.

———. "Proof and Reproof: The Judicial Component of Episcopal Confrontation." *Early Medieval Europe* 8.1 (1999): 1–11.

Vaesen, Jos. "Sulpice Sévère et la fin des temps." In *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages*, ed. W. Verbeke, D. Verhelst and A. Welkenhuysen, 49-71. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1988.

Van Dam, Raymond. *Gregory of Tours, Glory of the Confessors*. *TTH* 5. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988.

———. *Gregory of Tours, Glory of the Martyrs*. *TTH* 4. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988.

———. "Images of Saint Martin in Late Roman and Early Merovingian Gaul." *Viator* 19 (1988): 1-27.

———. *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985.

———. "Merovingian Gaul and the Frankish Conquest." In *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. I, *c. 500 – c. 700*, ed. Paul Fouracre, 193-231. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

———. "Paulinus of Périgueux and Perpetuus of Tours." *Francia* 14 (1986): 567-73.

———. *Saints and their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Van Uytfanghe, Marc. "L'audience de l'hagiographie au VIe siècle en Gaule." In *Scribere Sanctorum Gesta*, ed. Étienne Renard, 157-77. Turnhout: Brepols, 2005.

———. "L'hagiographie et son public à la époque mérovingienne." *Studia patristica* 16 (1985): 54-62.

———. *Stylisation biblique et condition humaine dans l'hagiographie mérovingienne* (*600-750*). Brussels: Paleis der Akademiën, 1987.

Verdon, Jean. *Grégoire de Tours: le père de l'histoire de France*. Le Coteau: Horvath, 1989.

Vinay, Gustavo. *San Gregorio di Tours* (*Saggia*). Turin: Edizioni Medievali di G. Vinay, 1940.

Vogel, Cyrille. *La discipline pénitentielle en Gaule des origines à la fin du VIIe siècle.* Paris: Letouzey, 1952.

Vollmann, B. K. "Gregor IV (Gregor von Tours)." In *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, vol. 12, ed. Theodor Klauser, cols. 895-930. Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1983.

Weaver, Rebecca Harden. *Divine Grace and Human Agency: A Study of the Semi-Pelagian Controversy*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996.

———. "Prosper's Theological Legacy and Its Limits." *Studia Patristica* 49 (2010): 381-94.
Weidemann, Margarete. *Kulturgeschichte der Merowingerzeit nach den Werken Gregors von Tours*, 2 vols. Mainz: Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, 1982.
Werner, Karl Ferdinand. "Gott, Herrscher und Historiograph. Der Geschichtsschreiber als Interpret des Wirken Gottes in der Welt und Ratgeber des Könige." In *Deus qui mutat tempora. Menschen und Institutionen im Wandel des Mittelalters*, ed. Ernst-Dieter Hehl, Hubertus Seibert, and Franz Staab, 1-31. Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1987.
Wheaton, Benjamin. "Gregory of Tours and Handbooks of Heresy." *Francia* 47 (forthcoming, 2020).
———. "Venantius Fortunatus and Christian Theology in the Late Sixth Century in Gaul." PhD diss. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2018.
Wickham, Chris. *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400-800*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
Williard, Hope. "Friendship and Diplomacy in the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours." In *The Merovingian Kingdoms and the Mediterranean World: Revisiting the Sources*, ed. Stefan Esders, Yitzhak Hen, Pia Lucas and Tamar Rotman, 41-53. 177-81. London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2019.
Wiśniewski, Robert. "Pagans, Jews, Christians, and a Type of Book Divination in Late Antiquity." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 24.4 (2016): 553-68.
Wood, Ian N. "Clermont and Burgundy: 511-534." *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 32 (1988): 119-25.
———. "Early Merovingian Devotion in Town and Country." In *The Church in Town and Countryside*, ed. Derek Baker, 61-76. Oxford: Clarendon, 1979.
———. "The Ecclesiastical Politics of Merovingian Clermont." In *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society. Studies Presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. Patrick Wormald, 34-57. Oxford: Blackwell, 1983.
———. "The Franks and Papal Theology, 550-660." In *The Crisis of the Oikoumene: The Three Chapters and the Failed Quest for Unity in the Sixth-Century Mediterranean*, ed., Celia Chazelle and Catherine Cubitt, 223-41. Turnhout: Brepols, 2007.
———. *Gregory of Tours*. Bangor, Gwynedd, UK: Headstart History, 1994.
———. "Gregory of Tours and Clovis." *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 63 (1985): 249-72.
———. "Incest, Law and the Bible in Sixth-Century Gaul." *Early Medieval Europe* 7.3 (1998): 291-303.
———. "The Individuality of Gregory of Tours." In *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. K. Mitchell and I. N. Wood, 29–46. Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 2002.
———. *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450-751*. New York: Longman, 1994.
———. "A Prelude to Columbanus: The Monastic Achievement in the Burgundian Territories." In *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, ed. Howard B. Clarke and Mary Brennan, 3-32. Oxford: British Archeological Reports, 1981.
———. "The Secret Histories of Gregory of Tours." *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 71 (1993): 253-70.
———. "Topographies of Holy Power in Sixth-Century Gaul." In *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Mayke de Jong and Francis Theuws, 137-54. Leiden: Brill, 2001.
Wright, Neil. "Columbanus's Epistulae." In *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings*, ed. Michael Lapidge, 29-92. Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997.
Wynn, Phillip. "Wars and Warriors in Gregory of Tours' Histories I-IV." *Francia* 29.1 (2001): 1-35.
Zuckerman, Constantin. "Qui a rappelé en Gaule le ballomer Gondovald?" *Francia* 25 (1998): 1-18.

Index

Aaron 162
Abel 116
Abiroth 162
Abraham, abbot 125, 127, 136-37, 151n28, 270
Abraham, patriarch 79, 136n239
Abraham's Bosom 158, 164-65, 199, 247n201
Absalom 243, 243-44n184, 245n189
Acheron 165n81
Adam 80-81, 82n148, 115-16
Adrianople 180
Aegidius of Reims, bishop 90n6, 95n34, 99n53, 134n228, 191-92, 276n2, 278, 294
Aemilius, L., proconsul 175n113
Aetherius of Lyons, bishop 266n275
Aetius, Flavius 175n115, 176n117, 220n80
Afterlife 21, 27-28, 71, 81-82, 123, 142-43, 145-82, 202-05, 216-18, 222-24, 228-29, 232-34, 237-39, 242-45, 247-48, 252-55, 257-62, 264-65, 269-72, 280-81, 288-89, 292
Agilan, Visigoth envoy 296n87
Agnes, abbess 84, 155n41
Agnes, saint 77
Agricola of Chalons, bishop 260, 262
Ahaz, king of Judah 201
Ahaziah, king of Israel 195n175
Alais 63n55
Alamans 209, 219n77
Alaric II, king of the Visigoths 111n109, 196-97n177, 210-11, 215n63, 217, 218n73
Alcimus, high priest 174n111
Alexander the Great 175n113
Alexander, monk 74n111
Albofled, Clovis's sister 155n41, 156, 157n46, 206
Amalaric, king of the Visigoths 196n177
Amalasuintha 227, 240
Ambrose of Milan 25n6
Amon, king of Judah 201
Ana River 176
Anastasius, emperor 211
Andelot, Treaty of 153n36-37, 155n41, 157n46, 267, 269, 283-84n42
Andrew, apostle 27-28, 36, 51, 86n174, 135, 154n37, 197n177
Angels 29, 31-32, 39, 44-45, 76-77, 83, 127n200, 147-49, 151n27, 152, 159, 163, 195n176, 204-05, 248n202, 258, 258-59n247, 293
Anjou 98
Angoulême 179, 211n48, 251
Anonymous, Gregory's sister 27, 61n45
Anthony of Egypt 156n46, 289n63
Antiochus VII, Seleucid king 175n113
Antoninus of Toulouse 155n41
Antoninus Pius, emperor 175n113
Apocalypse 83n155, 109, 117, 176n117
Apollinaris of Clermont, bishop 62, 155n41, 235n142
Apollinaris of Valence, bishop 270n301
Aprunculus of Clermont, bishop 157n46
Aquitaine 59
Aravatius of Maastricht, bishop 154n40
Arbogast, priest at Trier 197n177
Arcadius, boy 120n159
Arcadius of Clermont 221, 235, 240
Aredius of Limoges, abbot 16, 86n173, 112n117, 126n192, 152n30, 154n40, 156n46, 195, 205, 270n299, 289n63
Aridius/Arigius 210n42
Arianism and Arians 161, 162n67, 178n126, 180, 183n141, 203n10, 209n37, 210, 217, 227
Arius of Alexandria 111n109, 160-61, 182-83n141, 196n177, 217
Arles 28, 59-60, 61n46, 86n173, 249
Armenian apostate 161, 198n177
Armentaria, Gregory's mother 15n15, 16, 20, 26-30, 32-35, 39-48, 50-51, 53-55, 57, 62-64, 68, 71, 92-95, 127, 139
Armentaria, Gregory of Langres' wife 28n20
Armentarius, cleric 59
Armentarius, count 64
Armentarius, physician 91
Armentius of Tours, bishop 27n13
Artemia, Nicetius of Lyons' mother 92n20
Artemius of Clermont, bishop 156n46
Asclepius 113n118
Athanaric, king of the Visigoths 176n117, 196n177
Athaulf, king of the Visigoths 175n113
Athloc, Arian bishop 173n107, 197n177
Attalus of Langres 39n71, 235n141
Attila, king of the Huns 175, 220n80
Audinus of Tours 198n177
Audovald, duke 291-92n71
Auerbach, Erich 12n3, 12n5
Augustine of Hippo 15, 26n6, 79, 114-16, 119, 121-22, 135, 157, 159n52, 163, 198, 200, 224n98, 294-95
Aurelian, bishop 202n6
Ausanius 179
Austrapius, duke 57n21
Austrasia and Austrasians 11n1, 19n31, 59-60, 90n6, 97-98, 99n53, 105, 107-08, 182, 188-94, 198n177, 223n96, 224-25, 238n157, 248, 254n229, 257, 263, 267-68, 271-72, 277-78, 280-81, 282n35, 285n46, 285n47, 289n64, 290-91, 291-92n71, 294
Austrechildis, queen 177n122, 263-64
Autun 27n12, 40n75, 64, 155n41
Auvergne 26-27, 29, 31-34, 36-41, 45, 46n93-94, 51, 54-57, 59-62, 66, 78, 90, 105, 118, 192n170,

193n172, 197-98n177, 221, 224-26, 235-36, 240, 243, 248, 270
Avars 57, 249
Avignon 155n41, 192, 193n171, 210n42, 249
Avitus, emperor 37
Avitus of Clermont, bishop 16, 34n46, 61-62, 65n65, 67, 76, 84n158, 112, 151, 195
Avitus of Micy, abbot 230-31, 233, 252
Avitus of Vienne, bishop 80, 114, 115n131, 116, 151n27, 162n67, 210n41, 296

Baalzebub 195n175
Babylonian Captivity 81, 139
Badegisil of Le Mans, bishop 197n177
Baddo, Reccared's wife 291n69
Bailey, Lisa 13, 114, 121
Basina, Clovis's mother 208n35
Baudilius, martyr 151n28
Baudonivia, nun and hagiographer 203n13
Belisarius, Flavius 227
Benignus, martyr 29-30, 44
Berchildis, virgin 202n8
Bernstein, Alan 158
Berny 186, 257n239, 258, 275-76n2, 278, 279n17
Bertram of Bordeaux, bishop 54n6, 185-87, 197n177, 267n277, 288n62
Berthegund, Ingitrudis's daughter 288
Berthefried, duke 189n157, 196n177
Boantus, door-keeper 197n177
Bobolenus, deacon 160n61
Bodigisel, duke 223n96
Boniface, count of Africa 176n117
Bordeaux 102n68, 250n215
Bourgain, Pascale 292-93
Bourges 36, 263n264, 277n6, 283
Brachio of Menat, abbot 151-52, 154n40, 156n46, 165n83
Brioude 30-32, 35-39, 41, 45, 50, 54n4, 56, 60-61, 72-73, 90, 103n75, 147, 166, 169-70, 194n175
Brittany 57, 186n149, 219n79, 243, 277n6
Britto, Waroch's retainer 196n177
Brown, Peter 12, 128
Brunhild, queen 21, 66, 90, 92, 97-98, 99n53, 100, 116-17, 189, 196-97n177, 201n3, 203n9, 244n184, 249, 256, 261n261, 272, 277, 279, 281-85, 291n69
Buccelin, duke 175n113, 192n171, 227, 238
Burgolen 198n177
Burgundy 11n1, 26-28, 32-33, 41-42, 46, 48, 51, 53-57, 61, 66, 68-69, 90n6, 162n67, 193n171, 207n30, 210n42, 217, 220, 230, 232n130, 234n137, 240, 250, 257, 260-61, 271n301, 285n46, 289n64, 290
Byzantines 19n30, 162n68, 175n113, 211, 257, 291n69

Caecilius, praetor 175n113
Caesarius of Arles, bishop 72, 112n113, 114-15, 121-22, 133n227, 140, 160, 194-95n175, 199n179, 203n13, 296
Cahors 283
Cain 116-17
Caluppa of Méallat, recluse 151n30, 154n40
Carcassone 196n177
Carus, emperor 174n112, 175n113
Cassian, John 115, 123n178, 125-26, 127-28n201, 131-32, 140, 141n256, 296
Catianus of Tours, bishop 154n46
Cato, priest 54-55, 60, 65n65, 197n177, 241
Cautinus of Clermont, bishop 38, 54-56, 59n32, 60-61, 65n65, 74-75, 133-34n228, 197n177, 238n155, 241
Chalon 32n37, 54, 56, 68-69, 92n20, 266n275, 267
Champagne 189
Chanao, Berton count 243
Chararic, king of the Franks 196n177, 213, 216, 247n198
Charegisel, chamberlain 196n177, 253n227, 254n229
Charibert, king of the Franks 56-57, 59, 90n5, 99n52, 157, 185-86n149, 191n165, 197n177, 224n99, 245-51, 261
Charterius of Périgeux, bishop 257
Chartres 95n34, 96, 250
Châteaudun 95n34, 97, 251
Childebert I, king of the Franks 26, 33n39, 55-57, 141n256, 201n3, 204, 209n36, 221-22, 225-27, 233-35, 239-45
Childebert II, king of the Franks 11n1, 19n31, 90n6, 97, 98n49, 99n53, 105-08, 153n37, 155n41, 185n148, 188-89, 192n170, 193, 196-97n177, 219n79, 225, 252n224, 253, 255n232, 257n241, 261, 263, 267-68, 271, 276, 278, 280, 281n28, 282, 283n40, 284-85, 288n62, 289-91, 291-92n71, 294
Childeric, king, Clovis's father 208
Childeric, Sigibert's courtier 168-70, 196n177
Childeric the Saxon 198n177
Chilperic I, king of the Franks 11n1, 14, 21, 57, 60, 68, 73n106, 90n6, 96-99, 102, 104n80, 106, 108, 110, 117, 133n227, 177n122, 184-88, 190-91, 193n171, 197n177, 202, 202-03n9, 205-06, 219, 231n126, 245, 248n202, 249-51, 253, 255-64, 267-69, 276-80, 281n28, 282, 283n42, 289-90, 291n69, 294
Chilperic II, king of the Burgundians 162n67
Chloderic, king of the Franks 196n177, 212, 252n224
Chlodobert, Chilperic's son 258n246, 258-59n247
Chlodomer, Guntram's son 263n266
Chlodosuintha, Brunhild's daughter 291n69
Chlodovald, priest 154n40, 156n46, 221-22, 233, 270
Chlothar, Guntram's son 263n266
Chlothar I, king of the Franks 26, 33n39, 55-57, 68, 153-54n37, 157n46, 161, 190-91, 197n177, 203n12, 204, 206n23, 209n36,

221-22, 225-27, 232-34, 239-45, 248, 251-52, 290
Chlothar II, king of the Franks 258n246, 268, 271-72, 278, 281-82, 285n46, 290n66, 292n71
Chore 162
Chramn, Chlothar's son 56-57, 68, 181, 197n177, 234, 240, 242-44, 245n189, 253n229, 288
Chramnesind of Tours, citizen 151n26, 198n177
Christ, Jesus 35, 71n94, 77, 79-85, 86n173, 116, 119, 123, 127, 129, 133, 135-36, 138-41, 147, 149, 151n27, 153n35, 154-55n40, 158, 169n95, 176-77, 178n126, 203n13, 204, 209, 218-19, 222, 254n229, 273, 275, 277n7
Christopher, merchant 198n177
Chroc, king of the Alamans 196n177
Chrodin, duke 157n46
Chundo, chamberlain 196-97n177, 265
Chus/Zoroaster 170, 196n177
Civil war 56-60, 89, 95-100, 104, 110, 116-18, 133n227, 140-41, 172, 174n109, 209n38, 210, 218-19, 226-27, 240, 243-44, 249-52, 255, 257, 260, 262, 272-73, 275, 279, 282, 285n46, 291n68
Claudius I, emperor 175n113
Claudius II, emperor 175n113
Claudius, retainer 197n177, 264-65, 276n4
Clermont 26, 27n12, 30n27, 33-34, 37-38, 40, 46, 48, 54-62, 65n65, 67n74, 67n77, 74, 84n158, 103n75, 105n86, 133n228, 150, 161, 181, 183, 192n169-70, 193n171, 201n3, 210n43, 211, 221n85, 226, 235-36, 238n155, 241
Clotild, queen 33n39, 120, 206-09, 216, 220-27, 230, 232, 236, 240, 242, 262
Clotild, Clovis's daughter 209n36
Clovis I, king of the Franks 21, 26, 33n39, 37n61, 108, 111n109, 120, 128, 153n37, 155n41, 156, 157n46, 189n155, 192n171, 196n177, 202, 206-21, 223-24, 229-30, 231n126, 234n137, 235n139, 247n198, 255, 273, 291n69, 292n71
Clovis, Chilperic's son 98, 186n151, 250, 258n246, 258-59n247, 272, 278-80
Cologne 212, 236
Comminges 192
Commodus, emperor 175n113
Constantine, emperor 209
Constantinople 192, 193n171, 261-62n262
Cornificius, Quintus 174n112
Corpses 57, 70-72, 74, 149-50, 152, 163, 166-68, 190, 193, 223, 231-32, 239n162, 251, 253
Crispin and Crispinian, martyrs 258n247

Dacco, duke 191n166, 197n177
Dado 198n177
Damnation and the damned 21, 145n3, 146, 154, 157-80, 193, 195-200, 212, 217, 230, 234, 238, 243, 251, 253-55, 258-0, 262, 266n275, 267, 269, 272, 280, 282, 284, 289, 292
Dailey, Erin 13, 223
Dalmatius of Rodez, bishop 155n41
Dante Alighieri 58n29, 195
Dathan 162
David, king 67, 215, 217-18, 223, 243-44, 245n189
de Nie, Giselle 13, 49
Death and dying 16, 20, 25-35, 50-51, 53-66, 73n106, 78, 80, 82, 85, 86n173, 87, 89-91, 95-98, 100, 103-04, 106-11, 128n203, 131-32, 139-42, 145-49, 151, 153-58, 166-84, 188-90, 191n166, 192n171, 193, 195-98, 206, 211-14, 216-17, 220-23, 224n100, 226n110, 227-40, 242-47, 249, 251-53, 255, 258-59n247, 259, 261, 263-65, 268-69, 270n299, 271-72, 275-80, 281n28, 282-83, 285, 287-89, 293
Demoniacs and exorcisms 40n75, 66n69, 71-73, 94, 147, 204n16, 239n162, 265, 270
Demons 40n75, 66n69, 72-73, 83, 94, 123, 138, 147, 148n13, 165, 175, 177, 194n175, 225, 266n275, 270n299
Desideratus of Verdun, bishop 228
Desiderius, duke 192n171, 197n177
Desiderius of Vienne, bishop 282
Deuteria, queen 198n177, 225-26, 238
Devil 116, 129, 130n217, 131, 147-48, 171-72, 218, 259n252
Dijon 27n12, 47, 50, 56, 68, 70, 72, 95, 198n177, 210n42, 228n118
Diocletian, emperor 96, 138, 251
Dionysius of Paris, bishop 182, 197n177, 258n247
Disciola, nun 147, 150n22, 155n41
Dives 158, 165
Dolo 198n177
Domnola 198n177, 226n110
Domnolus of Le Mans, bishop 155n41
Donatists 114
Dracolen, duke 191n166, 197n177
Dreams and visions 29, 31-32, 39, 41, 44-47, 50, 54n6, 66n69, 68, 74, 76-77, 91-94, 129, 150-53, 155n41, 161n163, 163n71, 164-65, 179-80, 199n180, 204-05, 229, 237n151, 248n202, 258-60, 262, 264n270, 267, 276, 282
Droctulf 290n67

Eberulf, chamberlain 197n177, 264-65, 276, 288
Ebregisel, Brunhild's retainer 283n40
Egyptians 175n113
Ehud 215n63
Elarius, poet 164
Elijah 194n175
Elisha 151n27
Emerita 176
Enoch 151n27
Eparchius of Clermont, bishop 62, 154n40
Esders, Stefan 261
Eufrasius, priest 61n46

Eufronius of Tours, bishop 55, 57-59, 89-90, 92n20, 93n23, 100, 109, 140, 241, 248, 250n213
Eulalia of Emerita, martyr 176
Eunomius, count 185n148
Euphrates River 136n239
Euric, king of the Visigoths 180-81, 196-97n177
Eusebius Gallicanus sermons and preachers 112n113, 113, 115, 121-22, 130n217, 131n219, 133n227, 160, 167n89
Eusebius of Caesarea 15n16, 36, 78-79, 101n65, 174, 209, 286
Eusebius of Vercelli, bishop 42-43
Eusicius of Bourges, recluse 241
Eusthenia, Gregory's niece 61n45
Eustochius of Poitiers 198n177
Eustochius of Tours, bishop 154n40
Eutropis, martyr 150
Eve 80, 116
Evodius, priest 157n46
Exitus 174, 196-98n177, 247n198, 253-55, 284
Exocius of Limoges 86n174

Faileuba, queen 268, 290n67
Faithfulness 20, 35, 39-44, 47, 122-24, 135-39, 141-42, 269-70
Faretrus of Tours 198n177
Farro, Ragnachar's adviser 213, 214n59
Faustus of Riez 115, 130n217, 296
Felix of Bourges, bishop 150n22, 157n46
Felix of Nantes, bishop 63n56, 127n200, 155n41, 276n3
Felix of Nola, martyr 28n17, 83n153, 113
Ferreolus of Uzes, bishop 156n46, 289n63
Ferreolus of Vienne, martyr 31, 36n57, 37n58, 51
Flavians 175n113
Florentianus 157n46
Florentius, Gregory's father 16, 20, 27, 30-34, 36-42, 45-46, 50-51, 53, 108
Florentius, envoy 157n46
Firminus, count 59, 61n46, 62n49, 249-50
Foedamia, beggar 45-46, 237n151
Franco of Aix, bishop 168
Franks 19, 26, 56, 189n155, 207-14, 220, 226, 230, 232n130, 240, 280, 290-92
Fredegund, queen 21, 98n46, 99n53, 185-89, 191n165, 197n177, 205, 226n110, 258n246, 258-59n247, 264, 268, 271, 275-82, 285, 288-90
Fredegar, chronicler 282, 285n46
Friardus, recluse 107n95, 127, 129, 134, 149, 156-57n46, 223n96
Frontinus of Angoulême, bishop 178-79, 197n177

Galen 31n32
Galienus, Gregory's friend 187n152
Galla, saint 74n111
Gallic chronicle of 452 175n113
Gallic chronicle of 511 175n113
Gallus of Clermont, bishop 16, 20, 29-30, 34, 36-41, 45-46, 49, 51n110, 53, 54n4, 61, 65n65, 66-67, 69, 82, 108, 120, 149n16, 154n40, 156n46, 201n3, 210n43, 235-36, 238n155
Galswinth, queen 202-03, 205-06, 277-78, 280, 283n42
Geary, Patrick 25
Gelimer, king of the Vandals 196n177
Genesius of Arles, martyr 113, 154n40
Geneva 78
Geneviève of Paris 223
George, martyr 123
Georgia, nun 154n40
Georgius, count 74
Georgius, Gregory's grandfather 27n12
Germanus of Auxerre, bishop 38
Germanus of Paris, bishop 116-18, 155n40, 156n46, 243-44n184, 246, 248, 251-54, 272
Geta, emperor 175n113
Gildo, count of Africa 175n113
Godigisel, king of the Burgundians 161-62, 196n177, 210, 217
Godin, courtier 197n177
Godomar, king of the Burgundians 161-62, 196n177, 217, 220, 230-31
Goffart, Walter 12
Gomacharius, count 197n177
Goths 225
Grace and agency 71, 81, 110, 114-41, 182, 203n13, 209, 211n48, 215, 219, 258n247, 270, 273, 275
Greed 79n126, 110, 171-72, 183, 190, 194, 198n177, 212, 218, 227, 253n227, 273
Gregory I, pope 112-13, 117n140, 149n22, 161n63, 162n68, 165n81, 165n84, 198, 199n179
Gregory of Langres, bishop 27n12, 28, 30, 40, 47, 69-72, 82, 95, 149, 154n40, 157n46, 210n42, 235n141
Gregory of Tours
  And ecclesiastical factionalism 20, 54-55, 62-66, 74-76, 87, 90, 186n151, 276
  And ecclesiastical studies 20, 66-67, 76-87, 111, 141
  And modern scholarship 11-19, 292-96
  And the comedic 182-83, 189n155, 212-15, 283n40
  As Austrasian partisan 90n9, 99n53, 105, 108, 224-25, 266n274, 267-68, 271-72, 277, 281-85, 289n64, 290-92, 294
  As pastor 20-21, 89, 111-42, 158, 167, 182-200, 272-73, 275
  Association with Saint Martin 58-59, 69, 83-86, 91-95, 100-02, 140, 207, 276
  Communicating people's fates 146-47, 153-58, 160-62, 167, 170, 172-82, 184-85, 187-88, 190, 194-96, 196-98n177, 202, 204-05, 207, 212, 216-18, 223-24, 226n110, 228-29, 232-34, 237-39, 241-47, 251-56, 258-65, 268-70, 280-81, 284, 288

Discerning people's fates 145-53, 157-58, 162-72, 195-200, 202, 205-73, 277-81
During his early clerical years 53-87, 238n155
During his episcopacy 20, 43-44, 68, 89-100, 129-32, 140-41, 184-94, 201, 231n126, 250, 256-62, 263n264, 264n270, 266-68, 270, 271n301, 272-73, 275-77, 279, 281-85
During infancy and childhood 25-51, 53, 58, 67, 139
Impacted by illness and Death 20, 25-36, 50-51, 53-66, 87, 89-111, 275-77
Learning how to trust the saints 20, 36-51
Learning how to promote saints 20, 40, 66, 68-76
On war and peace 209-11, 217-20, 226-28, 249-50, 261n260, 263n264, 272-73, 290-91
Writing the *Historiae* 100, 104-11, 117-18, 207-08, 224, 248, 254-56, 272-73, 276-77, 285-92
Writing the *Miracula* 17n23, 85-86, 100-11, 113-14, 272, 285-86, 292
Grenoble 164
Gunderic, king of the Vandals 175
Gundioc, king of the Burgundians 162n67
Gundobad, king of the Burgundians 161-62, 181n138, 196n177, 209n39, 210, 217, 220, 253n229
Gundobad, Guntram's son 263n266
Gundovald, pretender 191-92, 192-93n171, 196n177, 239n162, 266n275, 267, 278n14, 283, 290, 291n69
Gundulf, duke 19, 117, 192n170, 272
Gunthar, Chldomer's son 233
Guntharius of Tours, bishop 55
Guntheuca, queen 233
Guntram, king of the Franks 11n1, 14, 21, 56-57, 59-60, 63, 65, 66n70, 76, 89, 90n6, 95-97, 99n53, 110, 118n147, 119, 153n37, 155n41, 157n46, 189, 192-93, 196-98n177, 219, 231n126, 245, 246-47n198, 249-52, 253n226, 255, 257, 259n247, 260-72, 276-80, 281n28, 282-85, 287-91, 292n71, 293, 294n82
Guntram Boso, duke 97-99, 155n41, 184n47, 190-94, 197n177, 198, 223n96, 248n202, 258n246, 278

Halsall, Guy 14n9, 104, 113, 117, 272-73
Hannibal 175n113
Hasdrubal the Boetharch 254n229
Heaven/Paradise 19, 28, 70, 74, 81, 83-86, 114, 120, 123-25, 128, 132, 140, 142, 145-60, 163-65, 172, 176-77, 195, 199, 202-05, 207, 209, 216-18, 223n99, 224, 231n126, 244, 253, 255, 257, 258n46, 269, 288
Heinzelmann, Martin 13, 15, 16n17, 66, 80-82, 145n3, 155, 176, 201, 255-56, 268-69, 286
Helena, empress 82
Hell 19, 83n155, 111n108, 145, 154, 155n41, 157-72, 180, 193n171, 194n175, 195-99, 217, 229-30, 254n229, 257, 260, 280
Heraclius of Angoulême, bishop 154n40
Heremigarius, king of the Sueves 176
Hermanafrid, king of the Thuringians 196n177, 234n137, 235
Hermenegild, Leuvigild's son 196n177, 243n182
Herod, king of Judea 21, 81, 176-77, 184-85, 196-97n177, 255n233, 259, 263-64
Hezekiah, king of Judah 201, 269-70
Hilary of Arles, bishop 164n80
Hilary of Poitiers, bishop 36, 111n109, 154-55n40, 187n152, 191n166, 205n18, 211n46, 217-19, 261
Hippocrates 31n32
Holy Cross, convent 92n16, 109n100, 203n12-13, 205n18
Holy Spirit 81, 125-26, 129n211
Hortensius 61n46, 198n177
Hospicius, recluse 118n146, 154n40, 247n201
Huneric, king of the Vandals 196n177
Huns 175, 220n80
Hydatius of Lemica 175-76, 178n126

Illidius of Clermont, bishop 34-35, 43, 51, 53, 74, 95n31, 125, 128, 139, 154n40, 156n46, 223n96
Ingitrudis, religious 288n62
Ingoberga, queen 155n41, 224n99, 246
Ingomer, Clovis's son 120, 206-07
Ingund, Sigibert's daughter 281
Injuriosus of Clermont 154n40, 156n46
Injuriosus of Tours, bishop 157n46, 223, 241
Innocentius of Le Mans, bishop 155n41
Innocentius of Rodez, bishop 283-84
Interitus / *interire* 81, 145n3, 172-81, 184-85, 187, 190, 191n166, 192n171, 194, 196-98n177, 200, 212, 213n57, 215-17, 226n110, 228-33, 236-37, 238n154, 239n162, 242-44, 246, 252-53, 258-61, 264-65, 268n290, 284-85, 288-89
Isaiah 152
Isidore of Seville 34n44
Israelites 58n29, 81, 153n36, 174n109, 196n177, 201
Italy 33, 100, 219n79, 227, 238, 240, 291, 291-92n71
Iudicium (*Dei*) / divine judgment 154, 157, 159, 162, 164, 165n81, 166-82, 188, 194n175, 196-98n177, 199, 212, 229-30, 243, 246-47, 251, 256, 260n257, 261, 265, 267, 284

James, Edward 19
Jericho 211n48
Jerome of Stridon 78-79, 162-63, 167, 169n95, 170, 174, 175n113, 180, 209n37, 254n229
Jerusalem 178n126, 254n229, 269n294

Jews 18, 61n46, 68n80, 84n158, 139, 160, 254n229, 266
John, abba 127n201
John 71, 153, 223n96
John I, pope 161n63
John the Baptist 73n104, 197n177
John, tyrant 220n80
Joseph, patriarch 80, 81n138, 174n112
Joshua 31, 156n46
Judas Maccabeus 174n111
Judgment Day 87, 102, 123, 133n228, 161n65, 162, 164, 167, 275
Julian, emperor 174, 175n113
Julan of Brioude, martyr 13n8, 29-31, 34-41, 45-46, 51, 54n4, 56, 60-61, 72-73, 86n174, 90, 92, 94-95, 103n72, 103n75, 118-19, 120n159, 122n172, 123, 135, 146-47, 152n30, 153, 158, 166-67, 169-70, 194n175, 235, 236-37n149, 237n151, 285
Julian of Randau, monk 62, 72, 223n96, 247n201
Julius Caesar 174n112, 175n113
Justin II, emperor 196n177, 203n12, 267n279
Justinian, emperor 227n115, 261n262
Justinian of Tours, bishop 27n13, 197n177
Justinus, Gregory's brother-in-law 61n45

Kitchen, John 13, 119, 130
Krusch, Bruno 100, 164n80

Lactantius 78n123
Lake Geneva 78, 170
Lake Leman 50n109
Lampadius, deacon 63, 95
Langres 27n12, 28, 33, 47, 54, 62-64, 66n70, 70-72, 89-90, 95
Last Judgment 83, 85-86, 89, 135, 161-63, 165n84, 269, 295n86,
Lazarus 158, 165n84
Le Mans 97-99, 123,
Le Velay 192n170
Leo I, emperor 170n99, 198n177
Leo of Poitiers, Chramn's retainer 197n177
Leo, priest 197n177
Leo, slave 39n71
Leobardus, recluse 128-29, 130n213, 131-32, 148-49, 154n40, 155n41, 157n46
Leobatius, abbot 112n114
Leocadia, Gregory's grandmother 27n12
Leocadius of Bourges 27n12, 36
Leudast, count 18, 99, 185-88, 197n177, 198, 252n224, 257, 276n3, 288
Leudovald of Bayeux, bishop 280n23
Leuvigild, king of the Visigoths 109, 243n182
Liber Historiae Francorum 223n96, 282
Limagne 42, 50
Liminius, martyr 74n111
Limousin 96
Living holy people 124-36, 140-41, 148
Loire River 98, 184n147, 190, 250
Lombards 117n140, 118, 193n171, 271n301, 291n69, 292n71
Lord's Prayer (*pater noster*) 82n148, 121-22, 141n256
Lucius Verus, emperor 175n113
Luke 158, 165
Lupentius of Javols, abbot 283
Lupianus, saint 123, 154n40, 157n46
Lupicinus, recluse 112n114, 126n192, 148, 154n40, 165n83
Lupus of Troyes, bishop 198n177
Lupus of Tours 198n177
Lusor, saint 154n40
Lyons 27n12, 36, 54n4, 63-66, 75-76, 89-90, 107, 170, 199n180, 201n3, 266n275, 269

Macliaw, Breton count 197n177, 213n57
Mâcon 266n275
Macrobius 214n59
Magnachar, Marcatrudis's father 263n266
Magneric of Trier, bishop 193
Magnovald 198n177
Magnus Maximus, emperor 36n57, 196n177, 256n237
Maldras, king of the Sueves 176n117
Mamertus of Vienne, bishop 37n58, 120
Manasseh, king of Judah 201
Marcatrudis, queen 198n177, 263n266
Marcion, heretic 116
Marcellus of Chalon, martyr 265
Marcellus of Paris, bishop 155n40
Marcovefa, queen 186n149, 246
Marius of Avenches 78n125, 175n113, 232n130, 271n301
Mark 136, 139
Mark, referendary 197n177
Marmoutiers 131
Maroveus of Poitiers, bishop 205n18, 263n264
Marsat 48, 77
Marseilles 269
Martial of Limoges, bishop 154n40
Martin of Galicia 154n40
Martin of Tours, bishop 13n8, 20, 33n39, 36, 37n57, 38n62, 47n98, 57n21, 58-59, 68-70, 72n101, 73n106, 77, 81-86, 89, 91-95, 97-103, 104n80, 107-10, 117n140, 123, 128-29, 131, 133n228, 135, 137, 140, 147-48, 151n28, 152n30, 153, 154-55n40, 156, 161, 163, 169n95, 171, 175n114, 177, 184, 186-87, 190-91, 194n175, 197-98n177, 207, 211, 216, 219, 222-24, 226-27, 239n162, 240-41, 243-44, 247-48, 250n213, 254-56, 258, 261, 264-65, 267, 268n288, 272, 276, 277n7, 286, 289n63, 293, 295
Martin, priest 197n177
Martius, recluse 40, 154n40
Mary, Virgin 48, 77, 148, 151n27, 197n177, 199n180, 203,
Mascezel, Moorish king 178n126

Matthew 82, 121, 128n206, 136, 139, 147n7, 158, 161, 231n126
Maurilio of Cahors, bishop 154n40
Maurus of Troyes 198n177
Maximinus, emperor 175n113
Maximinus of Trier, bishop 197n177
Maximus of Chinon, abbot 157n46, 223n96
Maximus of Nola, bishop 154n40
Medard of Noyon, bishop 137, 223n96, 242, 244, 248, 253, 258n247
Mediterranean 114, 153n36
Meratina, virgin 155n41
Merofledis, queen 246
Merovech, Chilperic's son 68, 78n124, 98-99, 104n80, 133-34n228, 185-86, 191, 256, 258n246, 258-59n247, 272, 278-80
Merovingians 14, 19, 21, 57-59, 89, 104, 110, 196n177, 200, 271-73, 277-92
Metz 90, 193n172, 238n155, 249, 261n261
Michael, Archangel 147-48, 151n27
Migrare 82, 153-56, 158, 161, 168n90, 173, 198n177, 204-06, 216, 222, 223n96, 224n99, 293
Migne, J.P. 164n80
Milan 292n71
Mithridates VI, king of Pontus 254n229
Mitrias of Aix, saint 123, 168, 170,
Moissat 62n51
Monegundis, religious 128, 157n46, 246n196
Monod, Gabriel 104n81
Morbus 30n29
Moreira, Isabel 13, 77, 198
Moses 79n129, 162, 170
Mount Etna 161n63, 164
Mummolus, patrician 60, 192, 192-93n171, 197n177, 250, 267
Mummolus, prefect 197n177
Munderic, bishop-elect 63
Munderic, pretender 196n177, 235n139
Murray, Alexander C. 14n9, 105, 287

Nantes 276
Nanthinus, count 197n177
Narbonne 78n124
Narses 227, 238
Nazarius, martyr 196n177
Neoptolemus 175n113
Nepotianus of Clermont, bishop 74n111
Nero, emperor 21, 175n113, 196-97n177, 255n233, 259
Neustria and Neustrians 11n1, 90n6, 186n151, 189, 191n165, 198n177, 250n215, 257-58, 268, 278, 281n28, 290, 291n69, 294
Nicetius, count 61n45
Nicetius of Lyons, bishop 32, 38n62, 51n110, 53, 54n3-4, 55, 57, 63-65, 66n69, 68-69, 75-76, 82, 92n20, 107, 123n177, 146, 154n40, 197-98n177, 201n3, 241, 260, 266n275
Nicetius of Trier, bishop 112, 112-13n117, 128n204, 152n30, 154n40, 157n46, 204-05, 225, 236
Ninus, king of Nineveh 175n113
Noah 80, 118
Nogent 257, 294n82
Nonnichius, count 197n177

Oaths, vows, and perjury 35, 50-51, 53, 58, 76n115, 92, 94, 100-02, 104, 109, 110n108, 119, 140, 158, 161, 172, 173n107, 178, 181, 186-87, 191, 196-98n177, 213, 246n196, 249-51, 261-63, 271
Obitus, *obire* 145n3, 156n45, 173n107, 179, 200, 208, 223, 228, 236, 238, 242, 246, 251-53, 254n230, 258-59n247, 264n269, 268, 289, 293
Odysseus 105, 158n51
Ommatius of Tours, bishop 155n41
Orange , Council (529) 115n132, 203n13
Orientius, bishop 286n50
Orléans 181, 230, 241, 260, 263n264, 263n266, 266, 268, 269n294, 277n6, 291
Orosius, Paulus 18, 78, 159, 175n113, 178-79n126, 208n30, 254n229, 273
Ostrogoths 33
Ouche River 50n109

Palladius, count 197n177
Palladius of Saintes, bishop 185n148, 267n277
Pannonia 227n115
Papianilla, Parthenius's wife 179, 199
Pappolus of Langres, bishop 197n177, 254n229
Papula, monk 154n40
Paris 55-56, 57n24, 59-60, 95-97, 182, 187n153, 188, 208n33, 211, 216, 221, 222n87, 223, 241n173, 242, 245-46, 248n202, 250-51, 257n242, 258-59n247, 261, 266n275, 271, 279
Parthenius, tax collector 179-80, 197n177, 199-200, 228-29, 253n229
Particular judgment 21, 161-64, 167, 171, 176n118, 179-80
Pastor of Brioude 169-70, 198n177
Patroclus, recluse 154n40, 157n46
Paul, apostle 64, 69, 77, 145, 218
Paul of Thebes, hermit 254n229
Paulinus of Nola, bishop 28n17, 83n153, 84n156, 113, 224n98
Paulinus of Périgueux 82n148, 83-85, 103n72, 137-38, 177, 295-96
Pelagia of Bourges 157n46, 195n176, 239n162
Pelagians 114
Pelagius, heretic 119
Pelagius, keeper of royal horses 197n177
Pelagius I, pope 141n256
Perire 231
Perpetuus of Tours, bishop 84n156, 102n70, 137n244
Peter, apostle 77, 86n173, 203, 222n87
Peter, deacon, Gregory's brother 27, 30-31, 33-34, 38, 51, 54, 57, 62-66, 71, 75, 95, 155n41, 173n107
Pharisees 158

Phatyr, convert 198n177
Phineas, Eli's son 196n177
Photinus of Lyons, bishop 223n96
Pientius of Poitiers, bishop 155n41
Pilate 81, 176-77, 196n177
Pilgrimage 29-31, 38-39, 45, 50, 56, 58, 89-90, 100, 102, 109, 244
Plague / Epidemic 28-30, 38-39, 44-45, 60-62, 78, 113n118, 117n140, 118, 120, 133n228, 165n84, 175, 176n117, 183, 194-95n175, 197n177, 263, 269, 276, 277n7, 278
Plato, archdeacon 187n152
Plato, Chlothar I's retainer 161, 197n177
Poitiers 37n60, 57n21, 59-60, 84, 90n5, 92n16, 96, 98, 109n100, 146, 147n9, 153n35, 184, 187n152, 191n166, 198n177, 203, 205n18, 211, 245, 250, 263n264, 266n275, 269n294, 288n62
Poitou 130, 263n264, 277n6
Polycarp, martyr 33, 46
Polyeuctus, martyr 261
Pomerius, Julianus 199n179
Pompey the Great 175n113
Portents and prodigies 77-79, 109, 149, 210, 229n121, 238-39, 243-45, 251-52, 254, 259n247, 259n250
Portianus, abbot 147, 154n40, 236n144
Praetextatus of Rouen, bishop 98, 231n126, 234n135, 256, 279-81
Priscus, merchant 198n177
Priscus of Lyons, bishop 65-66, 76, 107, 197n177, 266n275
Proclus, priest 197n177
Prophetic warnings 116-18, 168, 174n109, 230-34, 241, 248n202, 251-54, 257-58, 272, 280-81
Prosper of Aquitaine 141n256, 175n113
Provence 26, 225, 237
Prudentius 30n29, 77, 79, 83n153, 100, 116, 118, 138, 199n180, 296
Pseudo-Christ of Bourges 198n177
Publianus, archpriest 41
Purgatory 198-99

Quintianus of Clermont, bishop 37, 61n46, 67n77, 125, 154n40, 156n46, 197-98n177, 210n43, 235
Quirinus of Siscia, bishop 247n201
Quiteria, virgin 286n50

Radegund, queen 84, 92n16, 146, 147n9, 153n35, 154-55n40, 157n46, 177n123, 203-05, 233n132, 239, 270
Ragnachar of Cambrai, king of the Franks 196n177, 213-14, 216
Ragnemod of Paris, bishop 99, 259n247
Randau 62, 72, 157n46
Rathar, duke 198n177
Ravenna 277n7
Reccared I, king of the Visigoths 283n40, 287n55, 291n69
Red Sea 81, 153n36, 175n113
Rauching, duke 188-90, 193-94, 197n177, 252n224, 288
Reims 39, 56, 57, 70n94, 96, 198n177, 240, 251, 278
Remigius of Bourges, bishop 157n46
Remigius of Reims, bishop 128, 153n37, 155n41, 156, 198n177, 202, 204, 206, 209
Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus 220n80
Resurrection, bodily 18, 71n94, 149, 164n74, 165n84, 254n229
Reticius of Autun, bishop 125
Rhine River 96, 208n33, 250-51
Rhone River 59, 78, 170, 192n170, 249-50
Ricchar, Ragnachar's brother 196n177, 213-14, 216
Riculf, priest 90n8, 186n151, 187n152, 275n2, 276
Riculf, sub-deacon 186n151, 187n152
Rignomer, Ragnachar's brother 196n177, 214, 216
Rigunth, Chilperic's daughter 197n177, 279, 291n69
Riom 33, 46
Roberts, Michael 85
Roccolen, duke 97-98, 184-85, 197n177, 272
Rodez 283
Rogations 29, 38, 45, 120, 269, 276, 277n7
Romanus, abbot 112n114, 126n192, 154n40
Rome 73n106, 86n173, 113, 175n113
Rouen 97-98, 280n23
Rufinus of Aquileia 36n54, 182n141
Ruinart, Thierry 12n3

Sabaudus of Arles, bishop 59
Sabinus, Vespasian's brother 175n113
Sacerdos of Lyons, bishop 55, 241
Sagittarius of Gap, bishop 134n228, 192n171, 197n177
Saint-Maurice d'Agaune, monastery 199n180, 230, 232, 271n301
Saintes 245n193
Saints
  As conduits of divine grace 122-29, 134-35, 137-38
  Healing, liberating and protecting 25, 29-35, 37, 39-46, 49-51, 56, 58-61, 69-70, 73-76, 81, 83-84, 87, 89, 91-94, 100, 102n68, 119, 122-23, 127-28, 132, 137-39, 150-51, 158, 163, 181, 184n147, 194n175, 195, 199-200n180, 211n46, 236-37n149, 270-71, 276
  Ascending to and residing in heaven 82, 85, 123, 146-57, 203, 205-07, 216, 222-24, 242, 254-55, 269-70, 277n7, 293
  Invoked on Judgment Day 81, 85-87, 135, 275
  Meting punishment, vengeance, judgment 66n69, 75, 102, 110n108, 158, 161, 166-71, 176-78, 180-82, 184, 191n166, 193n171, 196-98n177, 237n151, 246-48, 260-62, 264-65, 266n275, 289

Salonius of Embrun, bishop 134n228, 197n177
Salvation and the saved 21, 28, 50, 71n96, 81-83, 85-86, 100-01, 110-11, 114-15, 120, 123-25, 129, 132-35, 140-41, 146-57, 159-60, 164, 173, 181-82, 199-200n180, 202-07, 211, 216-18, 222-24, 229-30, 247, 254-55, 262, 269-73, 275, 292
Salvation history 36, 81-83, 142n258, 207, 209, 294
Salvian of Marseilles 159
Salvius of Albi, bishop 16, 119n153, 147n9, 152-54, 155n41, 165, 177, 195, 231n126, 258, 269
Samson, Chilperic's son 258n246, 258-59n247, 279
Saragossa 240n171
Sarah, matriarch 79
Saturninus of Toulouse, bishop 95n31, 181-82
Saxons 56, 68, 240, 249n211
Secundellus, deacon 129
Secundinus, Theudebert's retainer 197n177
"Semi-Pelagianism" 115, 134
Senoch, recluse 130-31, 154n40
Septimania 283n40, 290-91n68, 291n69
Septimima, nurse 290n67
Sequanus, abbot 265n273
Sergius, martyr 193n171, 197n177
Severus, Guntram Boso's father-in-law 198n177
Severus of Cieutat, priest 154n40
Shanzer, Danuta 14n9, 81, 103, 113, 162-63, 285-86, 292
Shapur, Persian emperor 178n126
Sichar of Tours 151n26, 198n177, 231n126
Sicily 227
Sidonius Apollinaris 11n2, 37, 62, 112, 154n40, 155n41, 156n46, 181n136, 183n141, 188n154, 197n177, 296
Sigibert I, king of the Franks 11n1, 57, 59-60, 61n46, 62, 63n55, 65n65, 66, 73n106, 89-90, 92, 95-98, 99n52, 100, 104-08, 110, 111n109, 117, 118n147, 141, 168, 182, 184, 186n149, 190, 196-97n177, 201n3, 202-03n9, 203n12, 204n16, 207, 219, 225, 229, 244n184, 245, 248-255, 256n236, 259n247, 261-63, 272, 275, 277, 279-80, 282n38, 284, 292n71
Sigibert the Lame, king of the Franks 196n177, 212, 216, 235n139
Sigila the Goth 253n227
Sigismund, king of the Burgundians 162n67, 199-200n180, 220, 230-33, 251, 256n237, 270, 270-71n301
Sigivald, duke 197n177, 221n85, 225, 236-38, 254n229, 285n49
Signs suggestive of fates 71, 123, 146, 148-50, 161-62, 166-72, 177-78, 180, 184-85, 188-90, 193-94, 196-98n177, 206, 216-18, 226n110, 230-34, 238-39, 243-45, 254, 258-62, 266n275, 269-72, 279-81
Silvius Aremulus, king of Alba Longa 174n112, 178n126
Sin and sinners 19-20, 48-50, 77-80, 114-41, 145, 147-48, 158-60, 162n68, 163-65, 167-70, 177-78, 182, 186n149, 190-91, 198-200, 229, 233-34, 236, 243, 250, 252-54, 262-64, 272, 275, 281n29
Sodomites and Gomorrans 234n135, 254n229
Soissons 57, 98, 189n155, 242, 244, 245, 249, 257n242, 258n247
Solomon, king 215n63, 252
Soothsayers and folk healers 61, 68, 117n140, 122, 155n41, 191, 194, 194-95n175, 198n177, 223n96, 248n202, 258n246
Sortes biblicae/sanctorum 56n19, 68
Spain 102n68, 219n79, 240n171, 241, 247n198, 283n40, 287n55, 291n69
Spartans 175n113
Spiritual worth/maturity 46-50, 53, 54n6, 67, 76-77, 93, 125-27, 129, 133n228, 135, 148, 151, 258
Stephen, proto-martyr 54n6, 160, 203
Stremonius of Clermont, bishop 54n6
Sulpicius Severus 18, 36-37n57, 72n101, 77, 82n148, 83-85, 92, 107, 117n140, 129n211, 163, 167, 169n95, 175n113, 277n7, 283, 295-96
Sunniulf of Randau, abbot 16, 62n51, 164-65, 195
Syagrius of Autun, bishop 266n275
Syagrius of Soissons, king of the Romans 208, 213n56
Syagrius of Verdun, Desideratus's son 228
Sylvester of Chalon, bishop 41, 154n40, 223n96
Sylvester, bishop-elect at Langres 63, 64n58, 95, 157n46, 197n177
Symmachus 161n63
Syrians 175n113
Syrivald 198n177, 228

Terentiolus, count 197n177
Tetradius of Bourges, bishop 46n93, 237n151
Tetricus of Langres, bishop 16, 28, 33, 40, 47, 51, 54, 56-57, 62-63, 68-71, 154n40, 156n46, 197n177, 260, 262, 286n50
Theban Legion 271n301, 277n7
Thecla, virgin 77
Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths 160-61, 163, 196n177, 227n115
Theodore of Marseilles, bishop 192, 260, 266n275
Theomastus of Poitiers, bishop 146
Thérouanne 99n53
Theudat, king of the Ostrogoths 227, 240
Theudebald I, king of the Franks 33, 54-56, 65n65, 145n3, 225n104, 234, 238-40
Theudebert, Chilperic's son 96-97, 186n149, 190, 249-51, 253, 254n229, 258n246, 258-59n247

Theudebert I, king of the Franks 26-27, 33, 39, 67n77, 105, 108, 157n46, 179, 197n177, 200, 202n6, 204, 207, 222, 224-29, 234n136, 236-38, 240, 241n167, 253, 255, 266, 288, 291, 292n71
Theudebert II, king of the Franks 189, 285n46, 290n67, 291n68
Theudechildis, concubine 202, 246, 246-47n198, 253n229
Theudegisel, king of the Visigoths 196n177
Theuderic, Chilperic's son 258n246, 259n247
Theuderic I, king of the Franks 26, 33n39, 37, 46n93-94, 65n65, 108, 196-97n177, 201n3, 204n16, 209n36, 211, 221n85, 224-25, 228, 234-40, 242, 248
Theuderic II, king of the Franks 189n157, 285n46, 290n67
Theudovald, Chlodomer's son 233
Theudulf, deacon 197n177
Thorismund, king of the Visigoths 196n177
Thuringia and Thuringians 203n12, 208, 234n137, 240, 249n211
Thürlemann, Felix 12n5
Tiber River 113n118
Tiberius II, emperor 155n41, 257, 267n279, 293n78
Titus, emperor 178n126
Tobit 32
Touraine 90, 96n36, 97-99, 102, 104, 112n114, 116, 128, 130, 133n228, 184, 211n46, 250-51, 263n264, 275, 276-77n6
Tournai 97, 117, 251-53, 272, 279
Tours 11n1, 27, 37n60, 55, 57-60, 66, 71n94, 73n104, 73n106, 89-103, 108-09, 111, 117n140, 120, 128, 151n26, 155n41, 184-86, 186-87n151, 187n152, 191, 197n177, 211, 220, 223-24, 231n126, 241, 244, 245n193, 246n196, 248, 250-51, 255, 257, 262, 263n264, 264, 269n294, 271n301, 272, 275n2, 276, 277n7, 278, 282, 286, 288n62, 294
Transitus/*transire* 153-54, 156-57, 173, 175n114, 205, 207, 216, 222, 229, 247, 248n202, 253-55, 289
Trier 179, 193, 197n177, 204n16, 236
Typology 79-83, 86n173, 116-18, 136n239, 139-40, 170, 174n109, 177, 185, 194-95n175, 196-97n177, 215n63, 259, 269, 294

Ultio divina, divine vengeance 167-68, 170, 172, 174, 178n126, 180-82, 186-87, 196-98n177, 230-34, 237n151, 245n190, 247, 261-62, 266n275, 280
Ultrogotha, queen 242
Urbicus of Clermont, bishop 154n40
Ursinus of Bourges, bishop 154n40
Ursio, duke 189n157, 190n160, 197n177
Ursus, abbot 112n114, 128n204, 154n40

Valence 266n275
Valens, emperor 174, 178n126, 180, 196n177, 244n185
Valentinian II, emperor 175n113
Valentinian III, emperor 176n117, 220n80
Valerian, emperor 178n126
Valerius of Saint-Lizier, bishop 149
Van Dam, Raymond 13, 37, 51, 89, 93, 119
Vandals 153n36
Vannes 213n57
Vedast of Tours 198n177
Venantius of Bourges, abbot 128n204, 152, 154n40, 198n177
Venantius Fortunatus 16n18, 17, 19, 25, 82n148, 84-86, 92, 94n28, 100-01, 103n72, 114, 121, 133, 141n256, 151n27, 153n35, 155n40, 160, 165-66n85, 201-06, 210n45, 214n61, 216n68, 242, 245-46, 248n206, 249n211, 258n247, 276n2, 277n7, 293, 296
Veneranda, queen 263n266
Venerandus of Clermont, bishop 74-76, 156n46
Verdun 228, 235
Vettius Epagathus 36
Victorius, Visigoth duke 37, 197n177
Vienne 36n57, 37n58, 103n75, 147, 210n42
Vilithuta 165n85
Vinay, Gustavo 115n131, 134, 294n79
Vincent, martyr from Spain 155n41
Vincent of Agen, martyr 242
Virgil 164, 165n81,
Visigoths 197n177, 210-11, 247n198, 291n69
Visio Pauli 159, 165n81
Visio Petri 159n53
Vitry 97, 252
Vouillé 211, 216-17, 234n137
Vuldetrada, queen 238
Vulfolaic, deacon 133-34n228

Waddo, count 197-98n177
Wheaton, Benjamin 140
Winnoch, priest 130n212, 197n177
Wisigard, queen 225-26, 238n157
Wood, Ian 13, 104

Zerubbabel 80, 139-40

Gregory of Tours was a bishop of late antiquity who was famously devoted to promoting the efficacy of saintly powers. In his writings, both historical and hagiographical, Gregory depicted the saints and reprobates of his age. This book analyses Gregory's writings about death and the afterlife, thereby illuminating the bishop's pastoral imperative to save souls and revealing his opinions about the fates of Merovingian royals, among many others he mentions in his voluminous text. The study provides insight into Gallic peoples living at the dawning of the Middle Ages and their hopes and fears about the otherworld. It affords an original, nuanced interpretation of Gregory's motives for penning his works, particularly the *Historiae*, which remained unfinished upon the author's death.

Allen Jones is Professor and Chair of the Department of History and Philosophy at Troy University.

ISBN: 978-94-6298-804-0

AUP.nl